

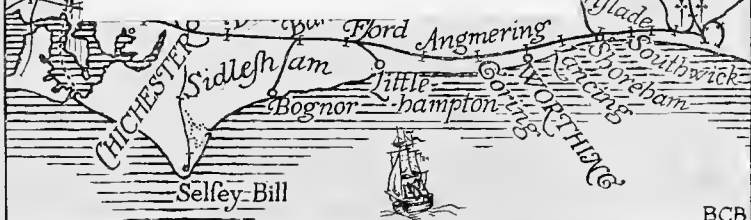
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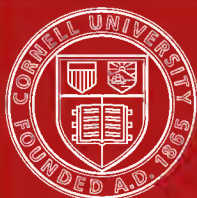
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Rambles in Sussex /



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RAMBLES IN SUSSEX

God gave all men all earth to love,
But since man's heart is small,
Ordains for each one spot shall prove
Beloved over all.
Each to his choice, and I rejoice
The lot has fallen to me
In a fair ground—in a fair ground—
Yea, Sussex by the sea!

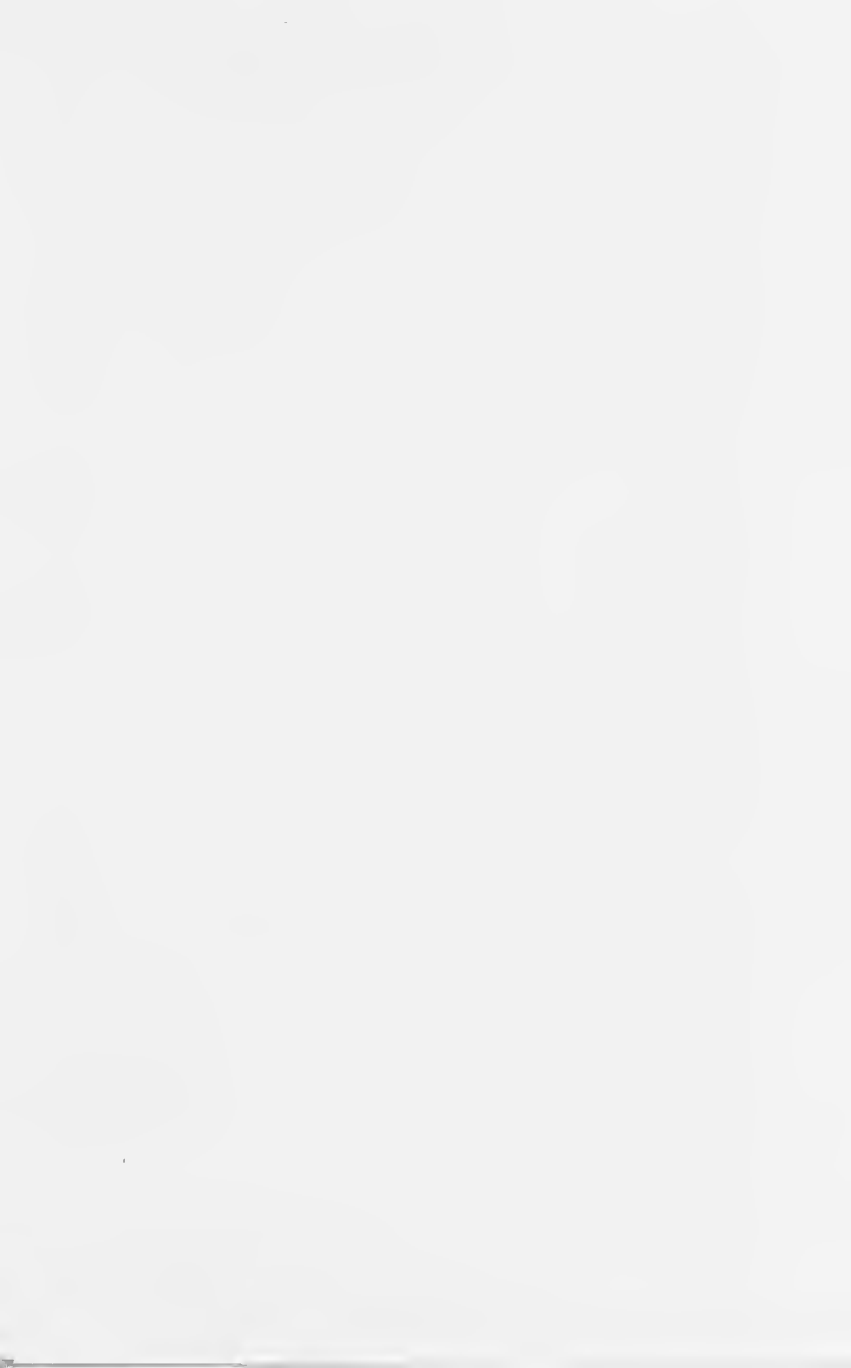
RUDYARD KIPLING

You came, and looked, and loved the view
Long known and loved by me,
Green Sussex fading into blue,
With one gray glimpse of sea.

TENNYSON

Higher and higher to the North aspire the green,
smooth-swelling, unending downs;
East and West, on the brave earth's breast, glow
girdle-jewels of gleaming towns;
Southward shining the lands, declining, subside in
peace that the sea's light crowns.

SWINBURNE





RYE FROM THE ROTHER

RAMBLES IN SUSSEX

BY

F. G. BRABANT, M.A.

AUTHOR OF LITTLE GUIDES TO SUSSEX, OXFORDSHIRE,
THE ENGLISH LAKES, ETC.

WITH THIRTY ILLUSTRATIONS AND RAILWAY MAP

SECOND EDITION, REVISED

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PREFACE

EVER since, about nine years ago, I wrote the *Little Guide to Sussex*, I have wished to retell the story of the county in greater detail and more connected fashion. In the interval, however, before I was able to find leisure from other work to return to Sussex, the subject has been ably treated by more than one writer. I trust, nevertheless, that my book may prove to have sufficient freshness and interest to make it more than a repetition of what has already been well said. The plan on which I have compiled it is, I believe, my own, namely, to set aside everything of which the interest, however great, is merely local, and to include only what would be of permanent interest to intelligent travellers, such as the characteristic features of the scenery, the history and architecture of every old building, and the manifold points in which the county touches the general history and literature of England. I may not always have been successful in judging what is of local, and what of general, interest, but the attempt has been made. The rambles are for the most part real walks or rides which I have taken, and in all cases the roads, localities, and scenery are familiar to me. They have been arranged to comprehend the whole county, not a single place

which has any interesting features having been omitted.

Where I have referred to authorities other than those already used in my former book, I have usually acknowledged the debt in the text or in a footnote. Many of the biographical details are from the *Dictionary of Historical Biography*. I have also had the great advantage of being able to consult two volumes of the monumental *Victoria County History*. In particular I have collated Mr. P. M. Johnston's valuable articles on Sussex architecture with my own notes, point by point, by which my descriptions have gained considerably in correctness.

The illustrations include reproductions of six of Turner's well-known Sussex views.

F. G. B.

OXFORD

March, 1909

NOTE TO SECOND EDITION

Mistakes and oversights have been corrected, but no attempt has been made to rewrite the book, by recasting old matter, or introducing new. It remains therefore a picture of Sussex before the war, slightly, but hardly in anything essentially, different from what it is at present.

OXFORD

May, 1922

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INTRODUCTION

I N describing any region of England, the interest may be considered fourfold. First, there is the pleasure taken by the eye in the scenery, which will be much enhanced by considering from what elements, and by what arrangement of them, Nature produces her beautiful effects. Secondly, there is the historical interest, which demands not only a recital of such events and famous personages as have lent lustre to the region, but also of the stories and legends that have gathered round special localities. Thirdly, there is the antiquarian interest, which centres round every ancient building which time has spared, whether castle, monastery, church, or private mansion. Lastly, there is the personal interest, to be satisfied only by a kind, yet shrewd and humorous, account of the inhabitants and their various customs and idiosyncrasies. To this last source of interest, possibly the highest of all, I shall, I am aware, be unable to minister, except so far as occasionally I have ventured to quote from the writings of others ; but to the other three I hope to be able to make some contribution ; though I feel, as I fancy all writers on such subjects must feel, that the amount due to one's individual observation and research is small as compared with that accumu-

lated by the patient labour of others. Under all of these three heads there is plenty to be said about Sussex. In the richness of its historical and antiquarian lore it hardly yields to its neighbour, Kent ; and though some of the highest elements of scenery are wanting to it, yet its varied landscape of hillside and forest, rolling plain and sea-coast, makes it one of the most delightful countries for holiday rambling, a country, it may be added, which can be reached by all dwellers in Southern England with little trouble and next to no railway journey. The well-known passages quoted on the title page will remind the reader that our poets show no lack of appreciation of the Sussex landscape.

Chalk and sand are the two principal elements in the formation of the scenery of our south-eastern counties. Wherever the soil is mainly clay, the landscape is flat and comparatively uninteresting. But when chalk or sand takes its place, hills at once appear—in the former case, bare, steep-sided downs with swelling outlines and grassy slopes ; in the latter, sand-hills, usually covered with thick-growing forest, interspersed with tracts of heathery common. The best scenery is when these two varieties of hills are brought close together, and it is this feature which gives the counties of the Weald (Kent, Sussex and Surrey) their greatest charm.

Sussex owes its attractiveness to two sandy regions and one chalk region. All the northern part of the county, forming the central district of the Weald, is taken up by the Hastings Sand—a reddish-yellow sandstone—which is piled up into hills, reaching their maximum height at Crowborough Beacon (792 feet).



LAKE IN FARHAM PARK (*see p. 170*)

There are two well-marked lines of high ground in this part of Sussex, both densely wooded, which traverse the whole county in more or less parallel lines. Of these the northern one is known as the Forest Ridge, while the other, which is somewhat lower, may be conveniently referred to as the Southern Forest Ridge. Round this central formation lie the several strata of the Weald in more or less concentric rings. As, however, only the southern part of these rings is in Sussex, it is more convenient to refer to them as bands which traverse the county roughly from west to east. The first band is that of the Wealden Clay, which gives pleasant, rolling champaign of no great height. Next comes the second sand-belt, the Lower Greensand, which rises in the west of the county into the hills of Blackdown and Bexley Heath, the former of which is the highest ground in Sussex (918 feet); and then forms the country extending just to the north of the South Downs as far as Chanctonbury, where the belt, which has been thinning for some time, disappears for all scenic purposes. Its contribution to the landscape is very great, for it is mainly a succession of forest, wild common, and park. Next comes the great belt of the chalk,¹ which bounds the Weald on the south, and descends into it by the steep escarpment of the South Downs, by far the finest and most characteristic feature in the Sussex landscape. The line of the Downs, facing north, runs across the county in an unbroken stretch of more than fifty miles, until it reaches the sea at Beachy Head. On the south side the chalk gradually sinks to

¹ The Gault and Upper Greensand affect the Sussex scenery but slightly.

the plain, forming an extensive plateau of from three to five miles wide. The highest point in Sussex, Duncton Down, is 837 feet high. South of the chalk is a flat region, which at Selsey is of considerable breadth, but narrows rapidly towards the east, and finally disappears about Shoreham. Up to this point the coast has been flat, but eastward of it chalk cliffs stretch from Brighton to Beachy Head, after which the Hastings Sand presently reaches the sea, and forms reddish-yellow cliffs eastward of Hastings, nearly as far as the county boundary. It should be added that the rivers are insignificant, and only perform one service to the scenery, that of piercing the Downs with the fine gorges in which Arundel, Bramber, Lewes, and Alfriston are set.

In arranging a series of rambles which should comprehend all Sussex, the main difficulty to be faced is that there are no convenient tourist centres in the Weald itself round which the scenery may be grouped. The difficulty has been met in the following manner. I left the Hastings Sand district, comprising most of North Sussex, to be treated last, and arranged a series of centres, more or less near the Downs, from which the rest of the county, *i.e.*, the Greensand and Wealden Clay districts to the north of them, and the flat country to the south, could be conveniently explored. These centres, in order from west to east, are Chichester, Midhurst, Arundel, Bramber, Brighton, Lewes, Eastbourne, and Hastings. After this, I started to explore the northern part, first travelling along the line of the Southern Forest Ridge westward from Hastings to Horsham, but diverging at intervals to describe the villages lying just north

or south of the ridge, but still on the Hastings Sand. Horsham I treated as another centre, in order to describe the Wealden Clay country which lies west of it, but is too far north to be conveniently reached from Midhurst ; and then I travelled eastward again along the main Forest Ridge till I finally reached Tunbridge Wells, my last centre. With this introduction I hope the plan of the book, and the scenery to be described, will be quite clear. The story of the history and archæology of the county I will leave to unfold itself point by point as the description proceeds.

About the method adopted in describing the ancient churches, it may be as well to add a few words. I have been desirous of giving information to those who wish to know the leading architectural features of the county. Accordingly I have included adequate, though not very detailed, descriptions of the more remarkable churches, and in the case of every village church I have at least mentioned its style and any striking points of interest. However, I feel that some may consider my accounts rather meagre, especially considering the large space I have often given to personal anecdotes and literary references. I would gladly have made them much longer, but I had in mind the fear of a perhaps much larger class of readers who know no architecture, and to whom the use of the technical terms of an unknown science may seem pedantic and prove repellent. In case this book should produce this impression, I should like to say that it is quite impossible to give a description of a church which is to have any value without some knowledge of architecture. Moreover the science is

extremely interesting and very easy, for the necessary groundwork can be stated in a few pages, and subsequent progress made by the delightful processes of observation and discovery. Accordingly I would earnestly entreat every church-lover (and what Rambler who deserves the name is not a church-lover?) to pay some attention to this fascinating subject, which attention will secure an ample reward.

In order to supply an illustration of these introductory remarks, and at the same time to give at the start a general idea of Wealden scenery, I add a short description of the most salient points which would strike the eye of a traveller who is entering the county for the first time, as perhaps the great majority of visitors do enter it, either by the London and Brighton railway, or by motoring or cycling along the high-road which runs parallel to it. To describe the view as seen from the road might be deemed sufficient for my purpose. But far more people travel by railway, and I must confess that I am most anxious to induce a few of them occasionally to look out of the carriage window. The shifting kaleidoscope of the landscape which can be thus seen when travelling, has been a source of intense pleasure to me for years, and I am sorry for that large band of travellers to whom a railway journey is always a dull affair, unless they are fortunate enough to find a book which interests them.

The first part of our journey is across Surrey. The long arms of London stretch southward for mile after mile, and it is not until long after South Croydon has been passed that the real country is entered. Soon the chalk hills begin to rise on both sides and enclose the

railway in deep cuttings, until at last, at Merstham tunnel, the train bores its way under the main chain of the North Downs. On emerging we are at once in the Weald, and the sudden change of scenery is most remarkable. The northern escarpment of the Downs descends steeply to the lower ground and may be seen stretching away into the blue distance to the left. On the right, owing to a bend in the Downs at this point, the view is at once closed by the steep, eastern side of Reigate Hill, at the foot of which is Gatton Park, a name indissolubly linked in history with Old Sarum as the rottenest of the rotten boroughs disfranchised in 1832. In the centre of the park, although it will hardly be made out from the railway, is the so-called "town hall," where an inscription commemorates the historical fame of the place, if indeed infamy would not be the correcter word. A mile or two further and we have reached the Lower Greensand and are again among hills. Why this sandstone has been associated with the colour green is surely one of the freaks of nomenclature. The name Redhill tells a truer story, and no one is at a loss as to its meaning, who has noticed the deep red of the cuttings near the railway. As in the south of the Weald, so also here in the north, the Greensand forms a line of hills parallel to the chalk downs, and lying a little in front of them. If we look to the right directly after the train leaves Redhill, both ranges may be seen stretching away to the westward. In the foreground the majestic front of Reigate Hill quite dwarfs the comparatively low sand-hills in front of it, but further off the conditions are reversed, for at a distance of perhaps ten miles is seen a good profile view of Leith Hill, the highest point in south-eastern

England, where the sandstone rises nearly a hundred feet higher than any chalk hill in Surrey, Sussex, or Kent.

Directly after this the line reaches the Wealden Clay, and we pass for some miles through a flat country. Rather more than half-way between Horley and Three Bridges the boundary between Surrey and Sussex is passed. Directly afterwards thick woods spring up on both sides and the country becomes more hilly, showing that we have reached the Hastings Sand, the central district of the Weald. Soon after leaving Three Bridges Station there is a peep at the spire of Worth Church on the left, the most interesting Saxon church in Sussex. The wooded hills now close in thicker and thicker on the line, which, after a series of cuttings, tunnels under the main Forest Ridge. Was this the tunnel where Clive Newcome was obliged to put his head so close to Ethel's that he fell under a suspicion of having kissed her? I always have imagined it was, but there are several tunnels on the line, and one is much like another. After we have emerged, and passed the wooded country near Balcombe, we soon reach the valley of the Upper Ouse, which lies between the two Forest Ridges, and which the railway crosses by a noble viaduct. The river, which has only run two or three miles, is insignificant, but the broad, level valley on the left, fringed on both sides with wooded hills, is splendid. The group of buildings which shows up so well is Ardingly College, one of the Woodard Schools. The train next runs again between high embankments, where we pass the Southern Forest Ridge at Hayward's Heath. After this we soon reach the Wealden Clay for the second time, and traverse comparatively

flat country. We are now rapidly nearing the South Downs, the long line of which may be seen ahead on both sides. On the left is Ditchling Beacon, one of the highest points ; on the right the fine outline of Wolstonbury Beacon, where the range turns south for awhile. The South Downs, it will be noticed, are much of the same character as the North Downs, but they are barren of cultivation and show fewer trees, facts which allow their grand outlines to be better seen. The train moves straight in the direction of two windmills which crown the hill above Clayton, and plunges into the Clayton tunnel. From this point deep cuttings and tunnels allow of no further view until, when we are close to Brighton Station, we can see over a large part of the town, with the sea beyond.

The journey by the road, which runs west of the railway and nearly parallel to it, is superior from the obvious considerations that we can see in front as well as at the sides, and that we travel over hills instead of through tunnels. A very rapid description will serve for the present. The first view of the Weald bursts upon us from the top of Reigate Hill, on the North Downs, over which the road passes. Stretching in front beyond the flat country is the long wooded line of the Forest Ridge, with Holmbush Tower showing conspicuously upon it. After descending rapidly and traversing some miles of flat country, we reach Crawley, the first Sussex village, whose long street lies just at the foot of the wooded ascent to the Ridge. At the top there are two level miles till the summit level of the road (about 500 feet) is reached at Handcross. Here again the view opens southward over the Southern Ridge and the South Downs. A steep and dangerous

descent leads to the valley, near the source of the Ouse and the ruins of Slaugham Place, a Jacobean mansion once owned by the powerful Covert family. Another ascent, and we reach the top of the Southern Forest Ridge; then, after a level mile among woods, we descend again by Bolney Common, from which the long chain of the South Downs stands clear before us in all its grandeur. Then again comes level ground till we reach the Downs, when the road leaves Wolstonbury Beacon on the left and climbs through a gap in the chain to the village of Pyecombe, celebrated for shepherds' crooks and its leaden font. Another half-mile and we are on the southern slope and can see Brighton in front of us, stretching to the sea. A gradual descent past Patcham and Preston leads us into the town. In summer there is no solitude to be found on this celebrated road, for the procession of motors and cycles is almost unending, and it may be that the road is more used than in the days when the railway was not, and George IV. and his friends used to roll in their carriages along it, when travelling to or returning from Brighton.

Many of the places just mentioned will be more fully described later on, the present object being to give a rapid sketch of the varieties of scenery. It should, however, be noticed that these two illustrative routes do not take us over the Sussex belt of the Greensand, nor the flat country between the South Downs and the sea, both of which districts are considerably to the west of Brighton.

RAMBLES IN SUSSEX

RAMBLES IN SUSSEX

CHAPTER I

CHICHESTER

IT is an interesting subject of reflection how far the ancient cathedral cities correspond with those of real importance in modern times. They were doubtless chosen as the sees of bishoprics because of ancient prestige, which in many cases has hardly been maintained. Thus, if the cathedral cities of England were to be selected again *de novo*, it is clear that Chichester would not be in the list. Admirably situated both for war and commerce in the far-off Roman and Saxon times, when Chichester harbour was an important waterway for the small and flat craft then in use, it lost most of its importance when the increasing size of ships necessitated deeper anchorage, and turned the currents both of trade and invasion into other channels. Yet before this had happened, Stigand had transferred hither the seat of the bishopric, originally founded by St. Wilfrid in Selsey, and thus given a permanent interest to the little city, which even to-day has not much outgrown the limits originally assigned by the Romans.

It is quite natural, therefore, that on approaching

Chichester the eye should first rest on the tall Cathedral spire, which lifts itself, a striking landmark, above the flat country lying between the South Downs and the sea, a region of which Chichester itself is nearly the centre. No rival to it is to be found in the rest of the county, for of ancient stone spires there are but five in all, and the other four are low and insignificant ornaments of village churches. In fact, in the hilly and undulating districts of the Weald and the Downs, a tall spire would not show to good effect, whereas this flat region is admirably adapted to display its full dignity. Thus, when in 1861 tower and spire fell, all the neighbourhood mourned for the loss of a familiar friend, and subscriptions were promptly set on foot, with the result that in a few years' time the spire was once again standing, looking almost the same as before.

The history of the city begins for us in the early days of the Roman conquest. It appears that Aulus Plautius, when he invaded Britain in 43 A.D., placed Vespasian, his legate, at the head of the second legion, and entrusted him with the task of conquering the South. At this time South Sussex was inhabited by a British tribe called Regni, whose king Cogidubnus not only submitted to the Romans, but formed a friendship and alliance with them, thus joining that band of kings who, as Tacitus epigrammatically puts it, have lent themselves as tools for the enslavement of their own people. If, as it is probable, we can identify the Cogidumnus of Tacitus with the Cogidubnus of the "Neptune and Minerva" inscription, preserved at Chichester, it would seem that he became the emperor's client, adopting his name, Tiberius Claudius, and receiving the title of "legate," the only known instance in which such a title was conferred on any

one not a Roman. Moreover, since the inscription was discovered in Chichester itself, the natural conclusion is that here was the capital of Cogidubnus, in the Romano-British city of Regnum, whose Latin name has been preserved to us in the Itinerary of Antoninus.

So far we seem to be on the solid ground of history. But the further inferences from this celebrated inscription are of quite a different order, and take us into the region of untrustworthy romance. The inscription refers doubtfully (the reading is uncertain) to a certain Pudens, and gives to Cogidubnus the name of his patron, the Emperor Claudius, whence the inference is that his daughter, if he had one, would be named Claudia. Hence are evolved the shadowy figures of a pair of lovers, Pudens and Claudia, who are identified first with the Christian converts mentioned by St. Paul in 2 Tim. iv. 21 ; and, secondly, with the Pudens and Claudia, whose wedding ode was afterwards sung by Martial. This pretty story when examined vanishes into air. It is, indeed, pointed out that the order of names in the Epistle, in which the names of Pudens and Claudia are separated by that of Linus, will agree well with the fact that they were not yet married. Also a second ode of Martial is pressed into the service, in which he marvels at the grace and accomplishments of a certain Claudia, although, as he says, she is descended from the painted Britons. There is, however, no means of identifying her with Pudens' bride. But the conclusive argument is that Martial's references to Pudens leave no doubt that at the time of his marriage he could not have been a Christian convert. Even apart from this consideration, the foundations of this triple identification would be very slight, for Pudens was quite a common Roman

name, and Claudia must have been even more common at a time when each of the numerous clients of the emperor took his name, Claudius, in accordance with Roman usage. Another version of this romance makes Claudia the daughter of Caractacus, with even less historical probability. A yet more wildly impossible story settles the married Pudens and Claudia down in Sussex, and brings St. Paul over to pay them a visit ! I see from Mr. E. V. Lucas's account that a painted window has actually been placed in Clymping Church, which is intended to commemorate this interesting event ! It is to be feared that these fables will linger long in the pages of local guide-books and the talk of local cicerones.

From these interesting by-paths we now return to the less exciting high-roads of history. Of the city of Regnum little is known until the old order yielded place to the new. In 477 the Saxons landed, led by Ælla and his three sons, if we can trust the Saxon chronicle, their landing-place being named Cymenesora, after the eldest son Cymen. The name has disappeared, unless it is traceable in Kynor Farm, something north of West Wittering in Selsey. According to this account, the invaders entered Chichester Harbour, their natural landing-place, but instead of making for the head of the creek at Bosham, turned at once right and landed on the flat shores of Selsey. The conquest of Regnum must have followed soon afterwards ; but we have no record of this event except the evidence of its new name Chichester, *i.e.*, the "ceaster" of Cissa, Ælla's youngest son.

Of Saxon Chichester we have no details. At the Norman conquest it was made the capital of the most westerly of the six rapes, a division peculiar to Sussex. It was given, together with Arundel, the next of the

rapes, to Roger de Montgomery, but of the castle he built to command it history tells nothing and not one stone is left. The real importance of Chichester dates from an event of a very different kind, which occurred at the same period—the transference of the South Saxon see from Selsey to Chichester, and the subsequent erection of the beautiful Cathedral, round which the remaining history of the city centres. Even its siege by Waller in the great Civil War (1643)—the only later event worth referring to—has its principal interest for us in the havoc which the intolerant puritanism of Waller's soldiers wrought in the Cathedral, by demolishing the organ, smashing the stained glass, and destroying all the brasses except one.

The steps of the visitor will naturally be first bent towards the Cathedral. If he does not come in a critical spirit, prepared to find fault because it does not possess the length and severe dignity of Winchester, nor the rich beauty of Ely, he will find it, though one of our smallest cathedrals, of a most graceful beauty and full of interest. It is specially commended by Mr. F. Bond (*English Cathedrals*) as “representing every style of mediæval architecture without a break from the eleventh to the sixteenth century.” Perhaps this claim is a little too extensive, for the construction of the building really stops with the Geometrical period, Curvilinear and Perpendicular work being represented, in the main building at least, by a few inserted windows. In fact, its architectural interest rests mainly on the beautiful examples it supplies of Late Transition-Norman and of Geometrical work.

The rudest and earliest arch in the building leads from the north transept into the library. It is thought that this may be a fragment of an old Saxon monastery, on the site of which the new Cathedral was built.

There are also two rude carvings now placed in the south aisle of the choir, one representing the raising of Lazarus, the other Christ meeting with Martha and Mary. These are Saxon, and seem to have been brought from the Selsey Cathedral. "The figures are the tall, emaciated, but dignified figures of Early Byzantine art, their stature carefully proportioned to their importance" (F. Bond).

The main vista of the edifice, including both nave and chancel, shows plain Norman arcades and aisles curiously overlaid with Late Transition work. In the transept the same arrangement will be seen. The explanation is that the Norman portions are due to Ralph, the third bishop, who consecrated the church in 1108, and then rebuilt most of it after it had been damaged by a fire in 1114; but the Transition-Norman to Bishop Seffrid, who, after a second fire in 1186 had destroyed the original clerestory, rebuilt it in a style which is little removed from Early English, at the same time adding slender angle-shafts and vaulting-shafts to the original Norman work. This mixture of styles is productive of a certain incongruity, since the Norman is plain and heavy, the Transition work light and graceful. The extreme beauty of Seffrid's work is best seen in the retro-choir (behind the high altar), where he removed the Norman apse and substituted two bays of his own. These were completed by 1199, and "well illustrate the grace and lightness of the coming Early English style, united with a few features of the expiring Transition-Norman." One of these features, the square abacus, is found in the Cathedral even in the later Early English work, and may be seen not only on the north and south porches, but also in the upper part of the central tower. It is supposed to be due to French influence.

In the pure Early English style the Cathedral has only its three beautiful doorways to show, of which the western or Galilee porch is much the latest (c. 1260); but, when that style began to give place to the Geometrical, a further series of changes gave the nave its second aisle, a charming feature unique among English cathedrals, though often found in Normandy. This was due to the formation of chapels outside of the original aisles, by connecting which and breaking through the partition walls, a second exterior aisle was formed on both sides entirely in the Early Geometrical period. Later in the same period the Lady-chapel was completed, the most characteristic portions of which are beautiful illustrations of the years in which English architecture reached its zenith. All that was left for the fifteenth century to do in completion of the edifice was to set the graceful Perpendicular spire on the tower (of which the lower part was Norman, the upper Early English), and to add the cloisters and the striking detached bell-tower. Of the two western towers, which are mainly Norman, one has long been in ruins, but has been lately rebuilt, and of course at present looks very new.

The monuments are less striking than in most cathedrals. The nave contains several by Flaxman, noticeable among which is one to the poet Collins, the most gifted son of Chichester, born here in 1721 and educated at the Prebendal School. He is bending over the New Testament, his "one book," as he declared to Dr. Johnson, when the end was close at hand, and a copy of the *Passions* is lying at his feet. More beautiful, however, are the floating draperies of the ascending figures in the monument to Agnes Cromwell. Among more ancient monuments in the nave are the tombs of the Lord Appellant, Richard

Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel, executed in 1397, and of Bishop Arundel (1478). The first has been badly restored (see also Chapter VI.).

Of the monuments in the rest of the Cathedral little need be said. Three plain tombs at the entrance to the Lady-chapel may be noticed, for one is to Bishop Ralph, founder of the Cathedral, and another may be to Bishop Seffrid, its principal restorer. Of the rest the three most interesting are in the south transept. One of these, now usually assigned to Bishop Stratford (1362), was long thought to belong to St. Richard, the holy bishop who was canonised after his death in 1253. The usual miracles were worked at his tomb, and he became for a while the most popular saint in southern England, bringing both fame and wealth to the Cathedral. But the tomb is too late in date to be St. Richard's, and it can hardly be doubted that all memorials of the Saint were destroyed by the ruthless hands of Henry VIII. It is fair, however, to add that Mr. Baring Gould, in his life of St. Richard, considers the tomb authentic, though its date shows that it must have been built more than a century after the Saint's death to replace a simpler tomb. He states that, although St. Richard's tomb was destroyed by Henry VIII.'s orders, yet that in 1543 the Chapter had the broken tomb, which was lying in pieces, restored and repaired.

Of the existing chapels the best is the large one now used as the library. It is Transition-Norman in style, and has a central pillar. It contains many objects of interest, including a "breeches" Bible, a copy of the service-books of Archbishop Herman with Cranmer's autograph, a silver chalice and paten, said to be of the twelfth century, and a leaden Papal absolution cross, which was found in the tomb of

Bishop Gosford, the immediate predecessor of Bishop Ralph.

The chapel attached to the Bishop's palace is in the Early English style, and is quite a little gem. It must have been built very soon after the retro-choir, for the richly-moulded doorway has a circular head, which can hardly be later than 1200. The chapel is vaulted, and the mouldings are very graceful throughout.

The cloisters do not form a true cloister-garth, but are merely covered passages to facilitate entrance to the Cathedral from the Deanery and other houses. They enclose a burial-ground, called Paradise. Their chief interest is the memorial tablet to the great divine, William Chillingworth, who was taken prisoner at Arundel, at the siege in December, 1643, and died here, worn out, and with his last hours disturbed by the untimely wrangles of his opponent, Dr. Francis Cheynell. Chichester has seen few sights as strange as the funeral, where the bigoted and intolerant Cheynell flung into the open grave a copy of Chillingworth's *Religion of Protestants*, "that it might rot with its author and see corruption." It is only fair, however, to the Puritan divine to add that he had carefully nursed Chillingworth during his last illness, and had after his death resisted the un-Christian proposal that he should not be allowed burial in accordance with the rites of the Church. Dr. Cheynell is much connected with Sussex, since he was Rector of Petworth, and lies buried at Preston, near Brighton. The historian Gardiner, however, is probably right in saying that he would hardly have been remembered but for his "connection with the scholar whom he sentenced to forgetfulness."

Of the Roman occupation of the city there are many evidences. Beside the inscription already referred to,

several Roman remains have been unearthed, including two sepulchral stones now in the local museum. The old walls, though there is little now left about them which is Roman, at least rest on Roman foundations, and mark the ancient limits of the city. There are walks round the greater part of them, the pleasantest spots being at the Priory Park in the north-east, and in the south-west part, where they form a fascinating border to the private garden of the Deanery. The four main streets, facing the points of the compass, betray a Roman origin, and two of them are the beginnings of Roman roads. East Street leads to Stane Street, which turns north-east and conducts over the Downs to London; while West Street leads to *Venta Belgarum*, the modern Winchester, by a road described in the Itinerary of Antoninus. At the intersection of the main roads is the fascinating Market Cross, dating from the reign of Henry VIII. The absence of village crosses in Sussex is a remarkable feature, but one such beautiful erection as this is worth a dozen of the mutilated stumps and shafts which are scattered so thickly among many of the Midland counties. The top has been somewhat damaged by the well-meant but injudicious munificence of Dame Farringdon, when she added a clock in 1724. So large a building at the central point of the city certainly seems an obstruction to the traffic, especially when on summer market days the streets are crowded, not only with the farmers' carts and tilted wains, but also with the motors of visitors come to inspect the Cathedral. Let us hope, however, that the day is far distant when utilitarian considerations will sweep away the work of good Bishop Story, or relegate it to some less crowded site.

The ten parish churches are to the archæologist a singularly uninteresting group. Only two are worth

entering—the tiny St. Olave's, in North Street, which shows an early door, possibly Saxon, and a handsome Decorated piscina, and St. Andrew's, near East Street, which is built above a Roman pavement, and contains the tomb of the poet Collins. But all visitors should find their way to St. Mary's Hospital, in the north-east quarter of the city. The date, founder, and original intentions of this interesting foundation are all extremely uncertain, and conflicting accounts are given of them. Whatever be the truth, in 1562 the foundation was definitely constituted as an almshouse for a warden and five inmates, subsequently increased to eight. The buildings are delightful, both from the charm of the architecture and the quaintness of the arrangements. The main building is a long hall, with a beautiful wooden roof, and with the chapel at the far end. The roof is supported on two rows of wooden uprights, and comes down in the aisles to within six feet of the ground. The living quarters are packed away in the aisles on either side, each inmate possessing two little rooms, the interior of which, though small, is well-kept and pleasing. At the far end is the chapel, which is entered through a Decorated screen, and contains beautiful Geometrical work of the same date as the Lady-chapel of the Cathedral, with sedilia and piscina uniform, and old stalls showing misereres. A list of previous wardens, which is hung up, gives the succession from 1242. Usually the warden has been one of the Cathedral canons. The visitor to almshouses like this no doubt often wonders on what principle of selection the choice of inmates is made: the privilege of ending one's days in such a home of peace seems so great, and the mass of the aged poor is so large. When I last visited Chichester (1906) I found some changes had been made. Up to that year, as the

newly constituted porter informed me, the old men and the old ladies had both occupied rooms in the original hall. But although the old ladies could get on very well by themselves, they used to quarrel with the old men. The latter are now located by themselves in some buildings just completed, and peace reigns again within the ancient walls.

Somewhat further north, in the same quarter of the city, is Priory Park, surrounded on two sides by the walks along the old walls. This is the site of Roger de Montgomery's castle, of which *perierunt etiam ruinae*. In the thirteenth century the site was given to the Grey Friars to build a monastery. Of this there now remains the choir of the chapel, a beautiful Early English building (c. 1260), but converted to unworthy purposes. It was used for some time as the Guildhall, and in that capacity witnessed the remarkable trial of the poet William Blake for sedition in 1804 (see Chapter VI.). The mound further north is thought by some authorities to be the site of the castle keep, by others the friars' Calvary. The charge of sixpence for admission to the park does not seem to be rigorously exacted, except when there is a cricket match. The cricket ground is one of the best known in the south of England, and the scene of many famous matches. One of my earliest boyish memories takes me back to a game here five-and-thirty years ago, when W. G. Grace brought an eleven to play "twenty-two of Chichester and district," according to the custom of those days, and when all the surrounding country crowded in to see the innings of the famous batsman. Grace opened his shoulders at the first ball, and sent it flying, not, alas! over the boundary, but into the hands of a man who had been judiciously posted in the long field. The disappointment of the large crowd was ludicrous, and



ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL, CHICHESTER

shouts of "Shame ! shame ! Put him in again !" were heard as the crack player retired to the tent.

The visitor to Chichester may be surprised at being reminded that Portsmouth is only fourteen miles distant. When the big guns of the naval station are fired, not only do they sound at Chichester as if close at hand, but the concussion of the air can be distinctly felt.

CHAPTER II

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF CHICHESTER

Bosham and Chichester Harbour—The Selsey Peninsula—
Boxgrove and Goodwood—Bow Hill and Kingley Vale

STARTING from Chichester Cross, let us now take in succession the four roads which lead out of the city in the direction of the four cardinal points, and see to what places of interest they can conduct us. And first let us go westward along the Chichester and Portsmouth road. The road itself passes over country as flat as the heart of a cyclist can desire, but to the north rise the South Downs, with the impressive height of Bow Hill prominent. At present, however, we are bound, not for the Downs, but for the flats; accordingly, after passing the hamlets of New and Old Fishbourne, we take a turn left about the third milestone, and in another mile find ourselves at Bosham, a place which the careless traveller might easily pass by unheeding. It is only a quiet fishing village, at the head of a shallow creek of Chichester Harbour, and consists of a few cottages grouped round a largish church, with a "Sussex cap," *i.e.*, a somewhat dumpy shingled spire, of the ordinary type. Between church and sea is a pleasant green, on which stands a quaint old mill. When the tide is high the whole is a charming spot to linger in on a summer's afternoon, but there are many

hours every day when the waters retire from the harbour, leaving nothing but far-stretching mud-banks. There is but little in the quiet, out-of-the-way place to remind us how often the mighty tides of history have surged through it, and how it was a spot well-known alike to Roman, Saxon, Dane, and Norman. The importance of Bosham in early times is connected with and traceable to the same causes as that of Chichester. When ships were small and flat-bottomed, shallow creeks were their natural landing-place ; but when they grew larger and of greater draught, deeper harbours had to be sought. Accordingly, after the twelfth century Bosham's day was over, and it sank into the little fishing village it now is, yet retaining, to the eyes of those who know its past history, a suggestive air of old-world dreaminess.

The evidences of Roman occupation, and the persistent tradition that Vespasian had a camp here, will fit in well with the account of the fall of Regnum and the submission of Cogidubnus. Unfortunately we know very little about the campaign, in which, as Tacitus says, Vespasian was pointed out to destiny[†] as the future emperor. From the account in the *Agricola* of that historian we should have inferred that he had an independent command, but from another passage we learn that he was the legate of Aulus Plautius, and in charge of only one legion, though, after the first campaign in A.D. 43, the serious work of reducing the south part of the island was left for the most part in his hands.

The next conquering race, the Saxons, as we have already seen, though they entered Chichester Harbour, landed in Selsey, much to the south of Bosham.

[†] Or is it "by destiny"? The latter rendering, if correct, is surely commonplace, and I should not think it worth quoting.

Bosham itself is more honourably connected, not with conquest, but with the spread of the Gospel, for its next visitors of whom history takes notice were a small band of Irish monks, who settled here, and were the first to preach Christianity to the South Saxons, though, it must be added, with very little success. The Danes first make their appearance in their usual character of raiders. A well-known story relates that, finding little to rob at Bosham, they carried off the church bells. But the ships were at once sunk by the additional weight, and plunder and plunderers alike lie under the waves of the central channel of the harbour. It is also said, with what truth I do not profess to know, that when the present bells are rung, an echo can be heard from the Itchenor Woods on the opposite side, and that the fishermen still believe that this is the chime of the buried bells. Another "buried bells" tradition meets us at Bulverhythe, near Hastings, a little hamlet formerly overwhelmed by the sea. When the sea makes a raking noise on the shingle the sailors say they hear Bulverhythe bells, and that this is an invariable sign of bad weather. Such legends as these are worth notice, for they are more associated with Cornwall than with any other part of our coast. Only a few months ago I came across the identical story of the Bosham bells, with every detail the same, but told of a village on the Irish coast.

The next historical scene shows us a Danish king master of England. Canute's connection with Bosham rests merely on tradition, but is probable enough. He is said to have had a palace here, in which a little daughter of his died at the age of nine. Some writers have even localised here the story of his commanding the waves to advance no further. But we need not picture the king seated on the mud-flats and waiting

for the tide to overwhelm them, for, if the story is true, which many historians doubt, it probably occurred on the shores of Southampton Water. From the time of Canute's residence the manor of Bosham became of importance. It was held by Archbishop Æthelnoth, who gave it to Earl Godwin. There is a ridiculous story that the Earl asked the Archbishop for a kiss (*Da mihi basium*), and then pretended he had asked for Bosham. The site of the Earl's palace is marked by an old moat. After his death it was held by his more celebrated son, Harold; and it was from Bosham that Harold started on the unfortunate expedition when he fell into the power of William and was forced to swear to help him to the crown of England. This we know on the evidence of the first picture in the Bayeux tapestry, in which Harold is depicted riding to Bosham Church to hear mass before crossing the Channel. The picture of the church is wholly conventional, and does not show the Saxon tower. Some authorities have inferred that the tower cannot be Saxon, an argument surely of little weight. Harold is obviously bent on a hunting expedition, for he has a hawk on his wrist and hounds are running before him.

After the Conquest the interest of the place soon wanes. In 1120 William Warlewaste, Bishop of Exeter, founded here a small college of prebendaries, of whose buildings a few shapeless fragments remain, just north of the church. In the next century these monks set their mark very decidedly on the surrounding country as church-builders, and many of the graceful Early English churches in the neighbourhood are probably their work. Once more only do we hear of the village in history, as the birthplace of Herbert of Bosham, Becket's secretary and biographer.

In Tennyson's drama there occurs a striking scene, in which the features of the place are graphically sketched. Becket, in a despondent mood, says to Herbert :

"Better have been
A fisherman at Bosham, my good Herbert,
Thy birthplace—the sea-creek—the petty rill
That falls into it—the green field—the gray church—
The simple lobster-basket and the mesh—
The more or less of daily labour done—
The pretty gaping bills in the home-nest
Piping for food—the daily want supplied—
The daily pleasure to supply it."

Herbert not unnaturally answers :

"Ah ! Thomas,
You had not borne it, no, not for a day."

Few traces have been left of this interesting history, but in many ways the "gray church" is suggestive. Part of the foundations of a Roman basilica built on the site are said to have been discovered in the chancel, and the bases of the columns supporting the chancel arch have been claimed as Roman. The chancel arch itself, however, is probably Saxon, while the tower, which shows external string-courses and "long and short" work, is undoubtedly of that style, and practically unchanged since the time when Harold worshipped in the church. The edifice was probably then rectangular, with an eastern apse. It has been twice lengthened in an eastern direction, first in the Norman, secondly in the Early English period. The latter change (about 1230) seems to have been due to Bishop Warlewaste's prebendaries, who, at the same time, pierced the nave walls to build new arcades and

aisles, with plain circular windows in the clerestory above, thus leaving the church, except for the insertion of later windows, pretty much as we see it now. Of these Early English alterations the most striking feature is the lancet quintett at the east end. Note also the small Early English crypt at the south-east corner, and the fine font of Transition-Norman work.

But by far the most interesting feature of the building concerns the supposed tomb of Canute's little daughter. In times when architectural style was little understood, it was supposed that the tomb in question was the very graceful one to be seen under a recess in the chancel, with a beautiful recumbent female effigy. It is now quite obvious that the style of this monument is Early Decorated—a fact which for a while threw discredit on the whole story. But in 1865, when the church was being restored, the late Vicar determined thoroughly to sift the tradition, and caused a careful search to be made. Just south-west of the chancel-arch, and near a small triangular piscina, which looks as if it had been connected with an important altar-tomb, there was discovered a rude stone coffin with a child's skeleton, on the very spot where tradition said the little princess was buried. The inference that this is the tomb of Canute's daughter is of course far from certain, for there is a further difficulty in the fact that such a daughter is unknown to history. This, however, may perhaps be due to the tender age at which she died. Another fine tomb in the south aisle is traditionally connected with Herbert of Bosham, but its style is too late.

The transcendent interest of Bosham rather obscures that of the other villages on Chichester Harbour. But the harbour itself is well worth attention, since so

and will grow nothing as yet but coarse grass. The principal village lies on the east coast with a largish Early English church close to the sea. Probably Thorney, Chidham, and Appledram all owe their churches to the building activities of the Bosham monks. Thorney Church, however, has some features which suggest an earlier foundation, in particular the tower, which appears to be Transition-Norman in style, and also the beautiful Norman font, now set between two Decorated screens. Still further westward in the harbour are Langstone Harbour and Hayling Island; but we have now crossed the boundary into Hampshire.

The road which starts southwards from Chichester runs into the broad peninsula of Selsey, the "seals' island," which forms the hundred of Manhood. This word is explained to mean Mainwood, but the forests indicated by the name have ceased to exist, and the whole peninsula is a dreary flat, but sparsely covered with trees. Even the neighbourhood of the sea lends to it little charm, since, owing to the level character of the ground, the sea is never in sight except on the actual coast. The eye of the traveller, weary of the monotonous dullness, naturally turns northward for relief, to where the tall spire of the Cathedral dominates the landscape, with the far line of the Downs behind it. The direct route to Selsey village and the Bill is by road or light railway through Sidlesham, but a somewhat divergent route may be adopted to include two villages which lie a little to the east, Rumboldswyke and North Mundham. Rumboldswyke takes its name from St. Rumbold, a martyr to whom the church is dedicated, and of whom several miraculous stories are told, but hardly anything really known. The church was originally Saxon. Of this there remain the

primitive chancel-arch, the wall above which is largely composed of Roman brick, and possibly the rude pillar-piscina. The other ancient parts of the church are Early English. North Mundham has a restored Early English church, but the restoration has not damaged the two fine arcades. The plain rude font is the largest in Sussex, and of very early date. Mr. P. M. Johnston is of opinion that this very plain and shapeless type of font which is found in so many of the Sussex villages may well be even Saxon. The original Saxon churches were mainly built of wood, and so have disappeared, but they must have had fonts, which would naturally be of stone, and therefore have often been preserved as solitary relics to connect their churches with Saxon times. There is a strange carving outside the south porch, and a tomb in the chancel which may be an Easter sepulchre. The tower has two Early English stages, and an upper one of Decorated work. Sidlesham, on the direct road to the Bill, is a large straggling village, to the north of which is the fine Early English church, which was originally cruciform, but has been docked of its chancel. The transepts (which remain) had probably chapels opening out of them on the east side. The lofty arcades and high lancets are beautiful features, but the church has been much spoilt by churchwarden work, and cries aloud for restoration. Let us only hope that when it comes the ancient features may be carefully and lovingly preserved. There is a good marble Early English font, and a Renaissance monument with very graceful carving. A considerable distance to the south was a large and picturesque red tide-mill, standing on an inlet of the sea called Pagham Harbour, which was reclaimed some years ago, but has again been invaded by the sea.

Formerly it was a noted haunt of aquatic birds of all kinds, to which in particular they would fly for shelter in stormy weather. For a picture of what the harbour used to be like we may turn to Mr. A. E. Knox's *Ornithological Rambles in Sussex*, a work to which I shall have to refer fairly often, for it may well be called the classical work on Sussex bird-life, and contains withal some charming incidental vignettes of Sussex scenery, such as the following :—

“Pagham Harbour is a wide-spreading inlet of the sea, which might almost be termed a great salt lake, for the entrance to the haven is so narrow and shallow, and the channel within so tortuous and uncertain, that none but vessels of trifling tonnage can attempt a passage; and even of these the number is so small and the arrivals are so irregular that they only arrest the attention of the observer as they cautiously thread their difficult way to deposit or receive a cargo of coals or corn at the hamlet of Sidlesham, which is seen rising like a little Dutch village from the flat shores in the distance.”

The eloquent passage which follows, descriptive of the aquatic birds which haunt the harbour, has so often been quoted that I hesitate to transcribe it again. It was first referred to by Bishop Wilberforce, who reviewed Knox's book in the *Quarterly* for September, 1849, the year of its publication. The good Bishop, as we shall presently see when we visit his home at Lavington, felt an intense interest in the natural history of his county, and indeed in the review he adds a few observations on birds which he had personally made in his own woods. After partly quoting the passage above mentioned, he comments: “Already our readers perceive that we are introducing to them a genuine

enthusiast. In truth, though written by a man whose profession and habits differ in many respects from his, the volume continually reminds us of our old delight, White of Selborne. Like White, Mr. Knox is a close observer of nature, who jots down what he sees in his own neighbourhood or excursions, from mere love to that of which he writes."

I am afraid Mr. Knox's entertaining little volume must be now out of print. I have seen no copy except one which I unearthed from the Bodleian library some years ago and read with the greatest delight. It might in truth well be reprinted as a standard work in these days of revived interest in the country and country life, for it is better than most of the books on Sussex which have been subsequently produced. I think that, if some kindly naturalist would re-edit it, and supplement it with some observations of the present day, he would confer a great boon on all lovers of the county. For my own part, however, I must confess to one small reservation in my liking for Mr. Knox. He is half-naturalist, half-sportsman. He usually seems to have a gun in his hand, and all his enthusiastic delight in the free movements of the birds he describes does not make his heart relent nor his finger less firm on the trigger when he gets an opportunity of killing some of them. This attitude of mind still seems so natural that many will wonder why a writer should stigmatise it as curious. And in fairness to Mr. Knox it must be added that he is a very champion of badly-treated species of birds, and that his pages are filled with his defence of kestrels, owls, and ravens against their natural enemies the gamekeeper and the village boy.

The railway stops at Selsey village, which is half a mile short of the Bill. The old church stands two miles to the north, but in 1865 it was all pulled down

except the Early English chancel, and the materials were used to build a new church in the village, which accordingly retains some of the piers and arches of the older church. It also preserves the old font, which is Transition-Norman, and of a type common in West Sussex. Selsey Bill itself, the most southerly point of Sussex, is a low, blunt headland, where until recently the chance rambler would be likely to find himself quite alone. But since the light railway from Chichester was opened in 1897 the number of visitors has been steadily increasing. It seems a pretty certain inference that when the place is finally enrolled among Sussex watering-places, the out-of-the-way charm, which doubtless attracted the first visitors, will be found to have disappeared. This day may not arrive just yet, for though the place has started a regatta, there is still no pier nor sea-front (1906.) The sea is encroaching on the land here, and at present houses could not safely be built on the low, red, crumbling cliff which immediately borders on the beach. A little further back there is a brand new hotel and a group of pleasant-looking bungalows, with only a strip of grass between them and the beach. There are several new lodgings in the village itself, and also down the road which stretches eastward to the life-boat station and the fishermen's huts and boats.

The chief interest of Selsey, however, lies not in forecasts of its future, but in its past history; not in what is seen, but in what is no longer to be seen—the Cathedral and Bishop's Palace, which now lie far out beneath the sea. For it was here that in 681 the South Saxons were first made Christians by St. Wilfrid of York, the Irish missionaries at Bosham having had but little success. According to the story told by Bede, there had been no rain in Selsey for three

years at the time when Wilfrid arrived. The inhabitants could find no sustenance except by catching eels, and were reduced to such a state of misery and despair that they used to chain themselves together in companies of forty, and leap into the sea to end their lives. Wilfrid taught them how to fish in the sea, an art with which they had previously been totally unacquainted. Having thus gained their confidence by ministering to their temporal wants, he found them willing listeners to the gospel of Christianity. He himself became their first bishop, and built his cathedral, monastery, and palace in the centre of the peninsula which for four hundred years was the seat of the Sussex bishopric. It is clear that the details of the story cannot altogether be trusted. For instance, it is quite incredible that a sea-faring people, who had been settled on the coast of Sussex for two hundred years, should have been ignorant of how to fish. The sites of Wilfrid's three buildings are now covered by deep water, since the sea has encroached much on the soft London clay, which offers but little resistance to the waves. Indeed, half of the peninsula is credibly ascertained to have been swept away in historical times. Evidence of this is afforded by the numerous shallows and sandbanks which, at no long time distant, used to be dry land. South-east of the peninsula is an anchorage called the Park, which actually was a deer-park as late as in the reign of Henry VIII. In the fourteenth century an irate bishop excommunicated some poachers for trespassing on it.

To the west of the peninsula are the Witterings, two villages of some interest, but to reach them from Selsey village involves a long and circuitous route over bad roads. The détour to Earnley is not worth making. East Wittering has a small church, which,

originally Norman, has been altered to Early English. The Norman parts are the interesting south door and two heads of blocked windows in the north wall. Near it on the coast is Bracklesham Bay, famed for its fossils, specimens of which may be seen in the Chichester Museum. West Wittering, as we have seen, is not far from the spot where the South Saxons landed. The fine church is the most interesting in the peninsula. Both nave and chancel contain beautiful Transition-Norman arches and columns, the character being very late and resembling work in the Cathedral and Boxgrove Church. In particular we may notice the graceful effect of the deep-cut Early English mouldings on the round arches of the chancel. There are also two curious monuments, with rude sculptures representing the Annunciation and Resurrection, a coffin-lid with a pastoral staff carved on it, supposed to be the tomb of a boy-bishop, and two oaken stalls with misereres.

Between the villages at Cakeham is a hexagonal brick tower, built to command the sea-view. It forms part of a palace erected by Bishop Sherborne in Henry VIII.'s reign.

The return direct from West Wittering to Chichester leads close to the small villages of Birdham, Hunston, and Donnington, none of which show features of interest.

We now leave Chichester by East-street, but turn at once into the north-eastern road. At first our course is still on the flat. In one and a half miles we reach West Hampnett. On the right is passed an Elizabethan house, now the Union Workhouse, and presently on the left, the church, which shows Saxon work, including some Roman bricks on the chancel walls. A still more interesting feature, a Saxon arch,

wholly made of Roman tiles, disappeared at a so-called "restoration." There is a beautiful tomb to Richard Sackville, with work of an Italian character. In another mile and a half we are close to the turn (left) leading to Boxgrove, but just before reaching it we may turn aside (right) to Tangmere Church, which was originally Norman, but which has been considerably altered to Early English, both the chancel and the wooden tower being in the later style. We can now turn northward again to the grand fane of Boxgrove, one of the three finest parish churches in Sussex, the other two being Shoreham and Winchelsea. It is strange that all three of these churches should have lost their naves, of which the ruined foundations are partly to be traced. The existence of so large a church in an unimportant village is due to a Benedictine Priory, which was founded on a small scale in the time of Henry I., but afterwards increased much in size and importance. It was attached to an abbey in Normandy, but, when alien priories were suppressed by Henry V., it was declared *indigena*, and kept its endowments, which, when subsequently confiscated by Henry VIII., were found to be £145 a year, an income representing, perhaps, nearly £3,000 of our present money. These meagre details are common to many English monasteries, and it may be that the monks of Boxgrove would have met with slight remembrance were it not for the splendid memorial they have left behind them in their priory church. In the growth of this beautiful edifice three stages can be traced. The upper part of the tower and the transepts are pure Norman. The west extension of the nave, now lying in ruins, is Transition-Norman. During the same period the tower piers were coated with work of this style, and a beautiful internal arcade



BONGROVE PRIORY—RUINS AND CHURCH

was built just above them, so that internally the whole tower is of later style than the upper external part. Finally, at the end of the Transition period, the chancel was built. This is the principal glory of the church. The work is essentially Early English, but retains some Transition features, *i.e.*, the square abaci and the admixture of some round arches. It resembles so closely in several particulars Seffrid's work in the Cathedral that it may confidently be assigned to the same date, *i.e.*, about 1200. Many details are striking, such as the peculiar arrangement of the vaulting, the lavish use of Purbeck marble, and the clustered and detached shafts of the eastern piers.

The monuments are numerous and interesting, but only one calls for detailed mention, the splendid Renaissance tomb of the ninth Lord de la Warr of Halnaker. He sent an unavailing letter of remonstrance to Thomas Cromwell when the priory was threatened with dissolution "My aunsystorys and my wyffy's mother are buryed there," he wrote, in the usual unorthographical style of those times, "and I have made therein a power chapell to be buried yn." After all he was not to lie in his "power chapell," for though his wife was buried here, he himself moved to Offington, near Worthing, where he died in 1554, and his tomb may be seen in Broadwater Church.

Of the priory there remain only two buildings, the entrance to the chapter-house just north of the church, which is beautiful Norman, and the refectory (or it may be the prior's lodgings) a little further off, which is Early Decorated.

A mile further north is Halnaker, an old Tudor mansion built by the Lord de la Warr just mentioned, who in 1540 gave it up to Henry VIII., retiring to his mansion at Offington. Henry, however, let it fall into

bad repair, and after Edward VI. had paid it a visit we hear little more of it. It is now a ruin, not particularly interesting nor picturesque, though the surroundings are pleasant. The park, too, has a neglected air.

About a mile westward lies Goodwood Park. We are at last off the flat country, and are fairly on the chalk, at the foot of the south slope of the Downs. It must be realised, however, that the Downs before us are not the main chain, which is always formed by the northern escarpment, but part of a subsidiary and more irregular chain which runs south of it, and is mostly connected with it by a high table-land. This southern chain, however, is at its grandest in what may be called the Goodwood country. Its highest points, Bow Hill and the Trundle, vie in majesty with the hills of the main range. Many of the heights are effectively crowned with small and trimly-rounded clumps of beeches, while extensive beech-woods cover the lower slopes and crowd thick into the valleys. This latter feature adds a special richness to every view ; especially when we begin to ascend the Downs, and mark the rolling lines of wood descending to the plain as far as the eye can see eastward, while southward rises the Cathedral spire, and beyond it Chichester Harbour and the sea.

Goodwood Park, though it contains no deer, is one of the finest and best kept in the county. The lower part is studded with splendid trees of all kinds, including several fine cedars. It is stated that a thousand of these trees were planted here in the middle of the eighteenth century, of which about 150 now survive. The estate has belonged to the Dukes of Richmond ever since it was purchased in 1720 by the first duke, who was the son of Charles II. by his French

mistress, the Duchess of Portsmouth. The house has no architectural merits, and is unworthy of its beautiful surroundings. It was enlarged by the notorious Wyatt, but though he did his best to spoil every building he touched, Goodwood House was quite safe in his hands, for there was nothing to spoil. It contains an interesting series of family and historical pictures, including all the six dukes and most of the duchesses. There are portraits of Charles I. and Queen Henrietta by Vandyke, and of Charles II. and two of his mistresses by Lely. Another portrait by Lely is of Frances, Duchess of Richmond—"La Belle Stuart," as she was usually named—whose face and figure were taken for those of Britannia on our copper coinage. She is depicted as Pallas. It is somewhat singular to consider that she is in no way related to the present family, but married the last duke of an older creation, who died in 1672. Another remarkable painting, called the Cenotaph of Lord Darnley, is entitled in Latin "The tragic and lamentable death of his serene highness, Henry, King of Scots." From the inscription it appears to have been painted within a year of his murder in 1567, but why or by whom is quite uncertain. It contains scenes describing the actual murder, in one of which two armed ruffians are dragging Darnley's body from his bed. It is strange, however, that there seems no allusion to the blowing-up of the Kirk of Field with gunpowder.

A little north of the house was once kept the "Neptune and Minerva" slab (p. 2), which throws such light upon the early history of Chichester. Further north are the Pheasantry and Carné's Seat, a tower from which there is a very fine view. Then the park merges in the beechwoods which cover the whole side of the hill right up to the racecourse on the very

summit of the Downs. The actual course, with its carefully kept green turf, runs mostly at the very edge of the woods, starting from the grand stand, which is close under the rounded Roche's Hill, usually called the Trundle from a fine ancient circular entrenchment that runs round it. It is difficult enough as a rule to connect horse-racing with romantic and beautiful associations, but "glorious Goodwood," as its admirers love to call it, may fairly claim exemption from this rule. It is, perhaps, a small thing that London society, from his Majesty the King downwards, congregate here in the last week of July, to find in the invigorating breath of the Down air a tonic after the fatigue of the London season. Rather should we look on this week as the summer festival of West Sussex, kept by young and old with a joyous excitement by no means of an unhealthy character. I well remember, when I was a boy in the neighbourhood years ago, how great a stir and interest the annual holiday created over the whole countryside. The unenterprising way of going to the races was to take the train to Drayton, where conveyances could be hired ; but every gentleman for twenty miles round who respected himself always drove the whole way in his own carriage. Indeed, the drive to and from the course was perhaps the best part of the fun. Many a year as a child I have watched, hour after hour, the long succession of crowds of carriages, many of which had started from Portsmouth, and which poured through the intervening towns and villages from an early hour in the morning, especially on the two great days, Wednesday, the "Stakes" day, and Thursday, the "Cup" day. All the carriages met at the foot of the Downs, after which came the crawl in long procession up the hot, white, dusty road, just



GOODWOOD RACES (ANCIEN RÉGIME)

outside the park walls. A small contingent took the longer round through the park itself, where perhaps they might meet H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward VII. (who always stayed at Goodwood House in the race-week), and gain the honour of a Royal bow for their own particular party. I have never seen the races since my boyhood, and I very much doubt whether the charm can be the same nowadays. The motors must have greatly increased the noise and dust, and destroyed the amenities of those delightful drives. Nor should I now think that the Trundle looks its best when thick covered with a motley crowd. Yet I always love climbing Goodwood Hill, and once again viewing the course. Indeed, apart from all old associations, it is well worthy of attention from all nature-lovers ; and most of all when the races are *not* being held. From the summit of the Trundle the view is absolutely superb. We are not, be it remembered, on the main ridge of the Downs, but separated from it by a deeply trenched valley, on the far side of which stretch magnificent beech-woods right up to the summit of the main ridge, the "back" of which is in view from Butser Hill to the Devil's Dyke. In the valley lie two or three villages of little account, Charlton, East Dean, and Up Waltham, of which the former is in full view, and gives its name to the mighty Charlton Forest beyond. The contrast is great between these richly wooded slopes and the bare stretches of Down with which we shall meet when we travel further east. Looking south, the level country is stretched before us like a map from Portsmouth to Worthing, with Chichester spire prominent, and the sea beyond all, the Isle of Wight showing far off to the right, beyond the inlets and islands of Chichester Harbour. During the great Civil War the

Trundle was the headquarters of a body called Clubmen, which was formed merely to protect their own property, and to join neither the King nor the Parliament. It is sad to relate that a body convened for so sensible a design was dispersed by Fairfax.

For the last time we leave Chichester, on this occasion by the north road, which seems to make straight for the Downs. After three miles of flat country we reach the two Lavants, whose churches need not detain the tourist long. At East Lavant there is a Norman door, while West Lavant Church is plain Early English with one Norman window. Here we turn left for Kingley Vale and Bow Hill. In less than two miles we reach the pretty ivy-clad church of West Stoke, which is Early English, with a good Jacobean tomb and a curious small tower over the south door. A little further is the entrance which leads us to the Vale after a rough field-road of about a mile and a half. Kingley Vale is a bowl-shaped hollow, running up deep into Bow Hill. The steep-sided arms of the hill which enclose it are thickly covered with yew-trees, with a few ash-trees interspersed here and there, and the whole is overhung with the wild clematis. In the hollow below are several scattered clumps of yews, the largest of which forms a solemn and capacious grove, into which we can enter and find ourselves alone in one of Nature's temples, since the outer branches curve downward to the ground and shut out all outside objects. Perhaps if Wordsworth had seen this grove, with its grotesquely gnarled branches, he would have thought less of his "fraternal four of Borrowdale." The sombreness of the spot is increased by the tradition that some Danish "kings" were defeated and killed here, probably in the battle "near Chichester," which the Saxon Chronicle assigns to

the year 895. Whether the Vale is really gloomy is a matter on which opinions may differ, and it may well depend on the time of day when the visitor comes. At midday, when the direct rays cannot penetrate the thick, dark foliage, it is easy to imagine the ghostly shapes of the slain kings are meeting in the grove. But later in the afternoon, when the more level rays reach the interior, and merry picnic parties are playing rounders on the sward outside, the spirit of gloom seems to vanish. If the kings were buried here, it would be romantic to believe that the yew-grove marks the spot; but tradition points to some fine round barrows on the top of Bow Hill, just above the Vale, which, however, may safely be pronounced prehistoric. The view of the flat country from Bow Hill is beautiful and extensive, but somewhat interfered with by the curving outline which has gained the hill its name. The objects in view are much the same as from the Trundle.

The villages which lie to the west of Bow Hill may be briefly mentioned here, since their somewhat slight interest hardly justifies a prolonged ramble in that direction. A little south of the main chain of the Downs lie four small villages, called Marden, which are almost the least accessible in Sussex. Three of them have quite plain churches, but North Marden has a little unspoiled Norman church with tiny windows, which is well worth a visit. Near the Mardens is Compton, where the church is rebuilt, but shows some Transition-Norman work built up in the north wall, and clearly belonging to a vanished north aisle. The chancel arch is of the same date. Further south is Stoughton, where there is a fine cruciform church almost entirely Norman and Transition-Norman, with a good original font and an Early English piscina, showing dog-tooth moulding. One window

in the south wall of the nave may even be Saxon. A little further south is Racton, the home of Colonel Gounter, who assisted Charles II. to escape in 1651. In the little church there is a Perpendicular monument to one of his ancestors, and two other interesting monuments; also a Perpendicular screen. In the parish is Lordington House, built by Cardinal Pole's father, and said to be haunted by the ghost of his mother, the Countess of Salisbury, who was beheaded by Henry VIII., though over seventy years of age, and who now appears with a red streak round her neck. The adjacent parish of Stansted has a forest with famous beech avenues, one of which is over a mile long. Stansted House was burnt down in 1900, when some carvings by Grinling Gibbons perished in the flames. Westbourne, as its name signifies, is the last village of the county in this direction. It has a breezy common, and a church at first sight entirely Perpendicular, which, when examined, reveals traces of an earlier structure. Two miles south the rambler in this part of the county may take the train at Emsworth.

But we are lingering too long at the western limit of the county, and must now return to the Chichester and Midhurst road at Lavant, and set our faces northward. In two miles the road enters, at the village of West Dean, a Down valley which opens south. The church contains a little Early English work, and a Perpendicular font. In another mile we reach Singleton, a beautiful village lying deep among the Downs, which rise steep round it on all sides, crowned with the round clumps of beeches which are so often seen in this neighbourhood. The church has a picturesque Early Norman (or even possibly Saxon) tower, an Early English arcade, of which, however, the bases have been altered to Perpendicular, and some other points of

interest, among them a very good stoup, stairs to rood-loft lit by a lancet window, and a picturesque wooden gallery. The windows are mainly Perpendicular insertions. The valley still runs northward by the side of Charlton Forest on the east, gradually rising till it terminates in a *col*, which takes us over the main line of the Downs. From this point there bursts on the eye a glorious view of the Midhurst scenery, which will form the subject of the next chapter. At our feet is the pretty village of Cocking, through which we descend, and in three more miles reach Midhurst.

CHAPTER III

MIDHURST AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

Midhurst and Cowdray—Cocking and the Downs westward to Harting—The Downs eastward of Cocking—Bignor and Lavington—Bexley Heath and Blackdown—The Petersfield road

BY crossing over to the north side of the Downs we reach a country very different from that of which Chichester is the centre. Antiquarian and archæological interests hardly obtrude themselves except at Bignor, Cowdray, and Petworth ; but, on the other hand, we are surrounded, not by an extent of flat plain, but by richly clad and finely shaped hills. I have already drawn attention to the fact that the most picturesque regions in the south-eastern counties are usually found where sandstone hills abut against chalk downs, as, for instance, in the Leith Hill district, and in the valley of the Kennet. Of this type of scenery the Midhurst district is one of the very best illustrations. Geographically it may be called the basin of the Little Rother, the principal tributary of the Arun. This pleasant little river runs from west to east in a valley enclosed on the south by the main chain of the Downs, which stands as a splendid background to every view, and on the north by the principal range of the Lower Greensand.

Opposite Midhurst this forms the fine Bexley Hill, which is covered with wood to the top, and for nearly three miles keeps a general level of from 500 to 600 feet. More to the eastward the range sinks down, but can be traced in the high ground of Petworth and Flexham Parks. In the irregular valley between these hill ranges there is a continuous line of beautiful sandy commons, sometimes of bare grass and heath, sometimes covered with forests of beech, birch, and fir, and occasionally varied by beautiful parks, such as those of Cowdray and Petworth. The Little Rother is the one Sussex river which can be called a delightful stream, and in some places, such as Trotton and Fittleworth, shows considerable beauty.

Midhurst itself will not take much description. Like many of the small Sussex towns, it was once a parliamentary borough with two members, but has now lost its representation. Its one illustrious citizen is Sir Charles Lyell, who was educated at the Grammar School, and whose taste for geological inquiry may well have been awakened by the interesting strata of the Weald among which his boyhood was spent, and the history of which he afterwards did so much to elucidate. The place may be described rather as an over-grown village than a town, and has mostly narrow streets, the one exception being the main thoroughfare running north, which is broad and pleasant, but contains no features of real interest. The most picturesque part of the little town is the small square where the church stands. This shows some gable-ends and ancient looking houses, including an old timber-built inn. The church has been rebuilt, all but the tower, the walls of which are now mainly inside the building. The top part is Perpendicular, but there are traces of older work

(apparently Early English) in the lower storey. But in truth it is not Midhurst itself but its setting which is so delightful. It lies deep in the valley beside the Little Rother, with wooded slopes rising from it on both sides, and with one of the delightful commons, which are characteristic of this district, close to its doors.

Far more interesting than Midhurst itself are the adjacent ruins of Cowdray, which lie on low ground in the south of the park, with the sparkling stream of the Little Rother flowing close by. The great Tudor and Elizabethan mansion was originally built in Henry VIII.'s reign by the Earl of Southampton, whose arms (an anchor and a trefoil) may be seen on the fan tracery vaulting of the entrance porch leading to the great hall. Since the earl had no children, he left the estate to his half-brother, Sir Anthony Browne, the king's standard-bearer, to whom Battle Abbey had been already granted at the Dissolution. In consequence Battle became comparatively neglected and the family removed to Cowdray. Sir Anthony's son was created the first Viscount Montague. He was one of the Roman Catholics who heartily supported Queen Elizabeth, and greatly pleased her by appearing in arms at Tilbury, at the time of the Spanish Armada, with his sons and grandson, and at the head of two hundred men. Three years later Elizabeth honoured Cowdray with a special visit. We have a full account of the festivities and the elaborate compliments which were paid her Majesty, but no Sir Walter Scott has put life into them as in the case of the similar revels at Kenilworth. The next Lord Montague left a "book of Orders and Rules" for his household, which shows the lavish magnificence with which the establishment was kept up. This continued for many generations, and a

special pride was taken in keeping the household arrangements as far as possible unaltered with the lapse of time. Accordingly when Dr. Johnson visited the house he remarked to Boswell, "Sir, I should like to stay here for four-and-twenty hours. We see here how our ancestors lived." But by this time the family was doomed and the curse about to fall. The story runs that when Sir Anthony Browne was put in possession of Battle Abbey he utterly destroyed the great church and the cloisters, and turned the abbot's lodging into a dwelling-house. As he was holding his first feast in the great hall one of the dispossessed monks suddenly appeared and solemnly cursed him, predicting that his family should perish by fire and by water. Two centuries and a half later this was strangely fulfilled. In 1793 Cowdray was utterly destroyed by fire, only the existing ruins being left. One week later the last Viscount Montague was drowned in making a mad attempt to shoot the falls of the Rhine. It is uncertain whether this accident happened at Schaffhausen or Laufenberg, and the point has been keenly debated in the Sussex Archæological Collections. So perished the famous race of the Montagues. The estate fell subsequently by purchase to Lord Egmont, who has built a new house in another part of the park. The beautiful ruins remain free for all to wander in, a memorial of vanished greatness. The large traceried and oriel windows, some of which are Tudor and some Elizabethan, make it highly picturesque. The principal rooms are the great hall, the chapel, and Queen Elizabeth's bedroom. The former used to be called the "Buck Hall," from some life-size stags, carved in wood, which were its principal ornament. It contains the largest of the fine oriel windows

consisting of six storeys. Near it is the chapel, with four traceried windows, which form a sort of apse. The square tower over the entrance-gateway still remains, but slightly damaged, and continues to display on its front the family arms as of yore. On the south-east is the detached kitchen, an octagonal building crowned with a tower. At the back of the ruins are the "close walks," not far from the Rother, where Queen Elizabeth shot deer at the time of her visit, her politic attendant, the Countess of Kildare, taking care not to be as successful in her shooting as her Majesty. To the north and the east Cowdray Park, with its fine trees, stretches for miles, a great boon to the inhabitants of Midhurst, for all may ramble in it at their will.

The beautiful country of wood and common which surrounds Midhurst begins at its very doors. The Little Rother has cut a deep channel through the heart of the Lower Greensand, and whether we start north or south we have to begin by ascending. If we set our faces towards the Downs and travel southwards, a mile of gradual ascent brings us to Cocking Causeway. Standing back a little left of the road is a pillar of dark stone, erected to the memory of Richard Cobden, the great apostle of Free Trade. He was born at Dunford, at that time an old farmhouse, about half a mile to the east, in the neighbouring parish of Heyshott. His father came of an old stock of yeomen, who had been rooted in the soil for centuries; but, lighting on bad times, he was compelled, in Richard's boyhood, to sell the farm. When in 1845 Richard Cobden himself met with great losses, and several friends and admirers raised a subscription for him of £80,000, part of the money was spent in repurchasing the family property



COWDRAY—ENTRANCE GATEWAY

On this Dunford House was built, which was Cobden's country home for the rest of his life. When he died in London in 1865, his body was brought home for burial, and laid in the churchyard of West Lavington, which is also only half a mile from Cocking Causeway. The church had been built fourteen years before by Butterfield at the expense of Laprimaudaye, curate to Archdeacon (afterwards Cardinal) Manning, at the time rector of Wool Lavington, of which parish West Lavington formerly was a part. Manning was greatly interested in church-building, and doubtless had something to do with the designs. Before the church was completed both Manning and Laprimaudaye were converted to Rome, but the latter would not retract his promised gift and made it over to the Bishop of Chichester. It now forms a separate parish.

Another mile and a half and we reach Cocking, one of the line of pleasant villages which lie under the Downs, and an admirable centre for Down rambles. It is worth pointing out that under every chalk down in England there will be found a string of villages lying so close together that it is usually impossible to travel more than two miles along the front of the hills without coming upon one of them. They are mostly situated at the point where the springs break forth at the junction of the chalk with the Upper Greensand. Thus the sparkling stream which flows through Cocking may be regarded with interest, for it must have determined the original site of the village. It issues from a somewhat remarkable ravine west of the main road, very narrow and well-wooded, of which there are very few instances among the South Downs. Indeed, the view looking down it from the railway

embankment which cuts across its upper part hardly seems like a Sussex view at all, and we might easily suppose ourselves transported to Derbyshire or Devonshire. The only other ravine of the same type among the South Downs of which I know, is Wannock Glen, and this has been lately ruined by the Eastbourne Waterworks. After leaving the ravine the stream at once crosses to the east of the road, and may easily give a visitor the fallacious impression that it flows from the beautiful wooded combe that cuts deep into Cocking Down. A little further it expands into a pond, the views of which, with the Downs as background, are much to be admired. The little church is close at hand. It has some original Norman features, such as the chancel arch, but mostly shows Decorated work, *i.e.*, in the tower, the south aisle, and some inserted windows in the chancel. Without being striking it is pleasing, both in the well-kept interior and in the outside view, with the fine trees of the churchyard in the foreground. The old east window is now erected in the rectory garden.

The South Downs are, for their size, one of the most impressive hill ranges in England, and the visitor has to force himself to remember with an effort that he is looking at a chain with an average height of less than 800 feet. It may be interesting to try to trace out the causes of this illusion. One, of course, is the absence of any loftier objects in the neighbourhood to affect the standard of comparison. In fact, few things are more striking to the patient observer of scenery than what I may fairly call the relativity of height. In one district a few hundred feet will suffice for an effect of grandeur, for which in another two or three thousand feet are not enough. Those, for instance, who have

seen Gordale Scar in Yorkshire will, I think, understand what I mean. Another more potent cause is the steepness with which they lift themselves from the plain, a feature which is always imposing to the eye. A third cause is due to their swelling proportions and smooth, rounded outlines. Few hills are at once so dignified and massive, and yet so restful to look upon. The combination of stateliness and repose warns us that we are gazing at the "everlasting hills." Nearly all chalk downs display these outlines, but in many, for instance in the Chilterns and in the Berkshire Downs, the effect is interfered with by the partial cultivation of their upper slopes. In Sussex these are entirely left clothed in the short turf in which Nature first willed them to be seen.

For further description of the Downs, it is natural to turn to the many writers who have said or sung their praises. But I must confess that few of these seem to me to have given their distinctive character. First, there may be quoted once more the familiar passage from Gilbert White of Selborne, whose home, it may be remembered, though he cannot be claimed as a Sussex worthy, is not many miles the wrong side of the Hampshire border-line. He writes: "Though I have now travelled the Sussex Downs upwards of thirty years, yet I still investigate that chain of majestic mountains with fresh admiration year by year, and I think I see new beauties every time I traverse it." In spite of the discriminating praise that follows, and though I have been informed that by the word "mountains" White only meant hills, yet the phrase "majestic mountains" always has to me a Brobdignagian ring, which spoils the passage to my taste. Of sacred bards who have sung the praises of the Sussex Downs there is certainly no lack, yet I fear

that the mass of them are but second-rate singers, and that enthusiasm for the county supplies imperfectly the place of poetic fire. But there are noble exceptions. Teunyson, indeed, though he has four or five passages referring to Sussex scenery, all of which I hope to quote, yet has not sung the Downs themselves. But among living poets there are two, Swinburne and Rudyard Kipling, to whom Sussex owes a deep debt of gratitude. In fact, these three are so pre-eminently the poets who have done honour to Sussex, that I have thought it right to place a quotation from each of them on the title-page. The time for quoting Swinburne again will come when I describe Shoreham and Beachy Head, so here I will only refer to his felicitous phrase in the passage already quoted "the green, smooth-swelling, unending downs." It will be noticed that the poet is here looking northward from the back of the Downs, and so also is Rudyard Kipling in the following beautiful stanza :¹

"No tender-hearted garden crowns,
 No bosomed woods adorn
 Our blunt, bow-headed, whale-backed Downs,
 But gnarled and writhen thorn,
 Dun slopes where chasing shadows skim,
 And, through the gaps revealed,
 Belt upon belt, the wooded, dim,
 Blue goodness of the Weald."

It is also to be observed that both poets are directly referring to the bare Downs which lie eastward, inland from Shoreham and Brighton. The Downs which lie west of the Arun, and which are in full view at Cocking, are in some respects different. For one

¹ From "Sussex" in *The Five Nations*. The stanza quoted on the title-page is the last of this poem.

thing, they are somewhat higher. The eye scarcely realises this, since the country immediately north of them is also higher. But the general level of the ridge may be some fifty feet higher than usual, while of the five highest points three are in this division, including the two highest of all, Duncton Down (837 feet) and Linch Down (818 feet). Just westward of the Sussex boundary-line is a still higher point, the magnificent Butser Hill (889 feet), which in fairness should be considered as closing the range just before it merges into the chalk plateau of Hampshire. But another remarkable difference is that these western Downs are more thickly wooded. We have already noticed the feature with reference to the southern side, and it is partly true also with regard to the steep northern side. These woods are of great beauty, and since they usually only cover the lower slopes, they do not impair the dignity of the bare, grassy slopes which crown them. But when we walk eastward from Cocking, we soon find that the trees grow thicker and thicker, and presently above Lavington cover the whole of the Downs for quite three miles. Beautiful as these hanging woods are, they hardly atone for the loss of the characteristic swelling outlines, and we would not wish all the Downs to be tree-clad in this fashion.

But we are delaying long at Cocking with the Downs inviting us to climb them. No delight which Sussex offers is so keen as such a ramble. The actual climb may take at the most twenty minutes, and then the traveller is on the broad summit-ridge, and can wander on, either east or west, from height to height, in the pure, keen air, tasting of the salt of the Channel, with soft, elastic turf under his feet, and with a constantly changing panorama ever before his eyes. But, though the pedestrian is not likely to be weary, however long

a walk he takes, the description of such a ramble may very well weary the reader. I shall venture, therefore, only to describe one Down walk, which I am inclined to think is the finest of all, that over Linch Down and Beacon Hill, returning to Cocking by the villages at the foot of the range.

We start by the ravine already mentioned, from which the Cocking brook flows, and then proceed upward by a narrow lane-path, until a gate admits us to the open Down. From this the ridge is easily attained. It is one of the easiest ways up the Downs, and involves no steep climbing. The ridge passes south of Bepton Down, the first height reached, and then leads us straight to Linch Down, the second highest point on the whole range. Bepton and Linch Downs form two projecting bastions to the north, of a type very common in the chalk hills. They are connected by a wide and deep combe, filled with fine trees, on which we are now looking down from the grassy plateau at the top. No foreground could be more effective for the magnificent view. It will be noticed that in all these Down forests the larger proportion of the trees are beeches, but the monotony is relieved by the single ash-trees which are scattered among them. Spread at our feet is the lovely Midhurst country, behind which the densely wooded slopes of Bexley Heath stretch as a background, on which the large new buildings of the King's Sanatorium are very prominent. Further off in the same direction are Blackdown, the highest hill in Sussex, and Hindhead, which is in Surrey. More to the right, and much further off, is the peaked outline of Leith Hill. The North Downs may, perhaps, also be seen, but they are not very prominent here, though they become visible when the sun is shining bright on the chalk quarries

of Betchworth. From further east on the South Downs the North Downs can be seen more plainly, but an observer may easily confuse them with the Leith Hill range which stands in front of them.

The view south is best seen not from the summit itself, but from a point a little further along the ridge, where the dense woods which clothe the southern slopes of this part of the Downs stretch away from the spectator's feet into a deep hollow below, beyond which there rise Goodwood racecourse, the Trundle, and Bow Hill, with its curving shape well displayed. For the more distant view I quote a few sentences from Mr. A. E. Knox, taken from a passage which, but for its length, I would gladly transcribe in full.

“Looking towards the south, the sea, though at a distance of several miles, is spread before you like a mirror. On the extreme right is a cloud-like but well-defined object, standing out from the distant horizon. This is the Isle of Wight. In the middle distance the tall spire of Chichester Cathedral shoots up from the plain, and the long, winding creeks and estuaries in the neighbourhood are distinctly visible, as the rays of the sun are brightly reflected from their waters; while, stretched below, between you and the sea, the flat, cultivated tract which extends from the south-western borders of the county as far as Brighton, spreads to the right and left.”

I have given some particulars of this view, for I believe it unequalled in Sussex. Our route now proceeds over the scarcely lower heights of Didding and Treyford Downs. The latter has a broad, flat top, on which are five remarkable barrows, similar to those we found on Bow Hill. They are known as the Devil's Jumps. Now comes a serious depression, after which we climb to Beacon Hill,

and reach the summit after first passing a sort of ancillary height, almost as high as the Beacon itself. The last two Downs have been freer of trees on the northern side, but now the woods begin again, and cover the lower slopes of the hill in profusion, gradually thinning at the top till they leave the summit bare, thus revealing one of the most characteristic Down outlines. The view is again magnificent, but of course little changed from that obtained from Linch Down. To the south-west, however, the country has opened up a good deal. There is now a clear view of Langston Harbour (the western part of Chichester Harbour), with Fort Cumberland at its entrance, and the whole of Portsmouth in view beyond. Further off is a good view of Spithead, with a long line of the Isle of Wight hills on the horizon. More to the right is Portsdown Hill. The name of our hill points to the fact that it was actually once used as a beacon station, probably for the last time when an invasion of England by Napoleon was feared.

After walking over two somewhat lower summits we strike a road which leads right over the top of the Downs. Just beyond is the beautiful Up-Park with a seventeenth-century mansion; and further off in the same direction, close to the county boundary, is another fine park, Lady Holt, formerly the abode of John Caryll, the friend of two poets, Pope and Gay, who were his guests here as well as at West Grinstead.

From the point where the road crosses the hill there is a charming view of the village of Harting at the foot. All the Down villages look their best when seen from above, but this view of Harting is one of the very best. Just westward of it the main chain of the Downs puts forth a lower arm to the

northward, forming a cup-shaped hollow in which the village nestles, protected by hills on the south and on the west. The thick woods descend the hill from Up-Park, and broaden out at the foot, thus enclosing the village with a border of green. Prominent among the well-built houses is the slate-covered spire of the cruciform church, which, on a nearer view, after we have dropped from the heights, retains its attractions. It is effectively placed above the well-kept churchyard, and shows a good triplet of lancets at the east end, and several fine Decorated windows in other parts. Inside it is not so successful, for the pillars have no capitals, an arrangement rarely conducive to gracefulness. The chancel is the earliest part, and dates from about 1220. The central tower and the nave, with the odd columns just referred to, are placed later in the Early English period, about 1260. Subsequently a good many Decorated windows were inserted, and Perpendicular windows in the nave aisles. Anthony Trollope lived for some years in the village, but so far as my knowledge reaches, he remained constant to Barsetshire, and never laid his scene in Sussex.

The return journey to Cocking is along the by-way at the foot of the Downs, of which there are fine views the whole way. Very often the upper slopes are picturesquely dotted with sheep. The South-Down sheep are medium in size, and have very white fleeces, which show up well against the green turf. The tinkling of the bells round the necks of the bell-wethers is a musical sound which accompanies the Down rambler along the whole range.

The first two villages passed are Elsted and Treyford, both of which have ruined churches, a new church with a far-seen stone spire having been built between

the two villages. At Elsted some attempts are being made to preserve the old building, but Treyford Church is falling into hopeless ruin. A little further on we reach Didling Church, the details of which are mainly plain Early English, but of which the situation is very impressive. The tiny church nestles close under the shadow of the mighty Down, without a house near it, and not even a tree except one solemn, dark yew. The last village passed through before we regain Cocking is Bepton, which has another picturesque little church, containing a fine Decorated tomb, probably once used as an Easter sepulchre. The views of Linch and Bepton Downs obtained from here are perfectly lovely.

The ramble along the Downs eastward of Cocking also looks tempting, but it will be found that trees obstruct the view more than in any other Down walk. The ascent of Cocking Down is indeed delightful, up a steep slope beside a well-wooded combe; but when the summit is reached, the edge of Charlton Forest soon forms a thick barrier on the south, and presently the trees are growing on the north as well, and we hardly get rid of them until we strike the Chichester and Petworth road across the Downs. Just before this point there is the highest summit of the Sussex Downs—Duncton Down (837 feet)—which, however, is not on the main ridge, but standing somewhat south of it. For this reason and others it is a disappointing hill, and there is no view in particular to be got from it.

The character of a Down ramble will be so clear from the description already given that we will suppose the walk continued along the summit level until Bignor Down is reached. Here again we are on the traces of the Romans, with which we have not met since we left Chichester. The white road which

descends the hill obliquely started from Chichester and proceeds northward by Pulborough and Billingshurst, revealing itself as an authentic Roman road by its straightness and by the name Stane Street which the Saxons gave it. Nothing else is known of it, for the Itinerary of Antoninus does not mention it, though the so-called Itinerary of Richard of Cirencester professes to describe it—that strange forgery by which Charles Bertram deceived the world of savants for quite a hundred years. Let us now follow the footsteps of many a Roman legion and descend the hill to Bignor. We reach at once one of the most interesting places in Sussex—the site of a Roman villa, of which considerable remains still exist, and which was obviously built to be near the Roman road. Many who should have known better have repeated the statement that here was the Roman station *Ad decimum, i.e.*, at the tenth mile-stone from Regnum (Chichester), and inferred that the villa was the residence of the Roman governor. In reality this name only occurs in Bertram's forgery, and nothing is known of the site beyond the curious local tradition that a Roman town existed in the Berry, the field where in 1811 the villa was discovered. It is quite probable that the villa belonged to no Roman at all, but to a wealthy Briton who had adopted Roman civilization. If this is so, the associations of the spot will not be the terror of the Roman conquest, but the *pax Romana* of the later period, when the conquered had learnt the arts of life from their conquerors, and when the flash of steel as a cohort descended the Downs would be a welcome sight, heralding a break in the monotonous life of the country villa.

The buildings which remain cover a wide area, as much as 600 feet by 350 feet. Of the four tessellated

pavements, however, which are the principal remains, three lie close together and a fourth smaller one at some distance. The figures of these pavements, though by no means the best specimens of Roman art found in Britain, are of great interest. On the smaller pavement, which lies apart from the rest, is simply a head of Medusa. The largest of the other three has two compartments, one containing Ganymede carried off by the eagle, the other a series of dancing nymphs set round a circular space in the centre where a fountain may have played. A second pavement shows a veiled figure with a leafless branch in her hand, usually supposed to symbolise Winter.

The last and most interesting pavement shows a row of figures representing Cupids fighting as gladiators. Apparently only three characters are intended, two gladiators and a rudiarius (an officer who managed the fighting and bore a rod as an emblem of office); but they are repeated in four scenes. Above is a semi-circle containing a larger female figure attended by birds. These birds certainly look like peacocks, and suggest that the figure is that of Juno, but as Venus is the more likely goddess to be associated with Cupids, some have thought that they are really pheasants. When, however, I last visited the spot, the attendant pointed out that the tail of one of the birds contains some minute glittering tessellæ, which suggest the hues of a peacock's tail. It may be added that the face itself is stern and calm rather than beautiful, and would suit the Queen of Heaven better than the Goddess of Love.

Bignor Church is of some interest, for it contains an old chancel arch, which some authorities think Roman. Otherwise the church is Early English, plain but good, but there is a small Decorated screen (c. 1320).

If we trace Stane Street northwards we soon come upon some more Roman remains. At Hardham there is a Romano-British camp, which the railway has cut into, and which enclosed a fort, or possibly a small town. This is now considered to be the only genuine Roman camp in the county. It is of the orthodox rectangular shape, whereas the so-called "Roman camps" on the Downs, which are now judged to be prehistoric, regularly follow the contours of the hill-top. Also the Roman custom was to construct camps, not on lofty heights, but on comparatively level ground with fuel and water within easy reach. A little further north, near Pulborough, there is a little hill called Park Mount, mainly artificial, and commanding the junction of the Arun and Little Rother valleys. This was for some time considered either the site of a Roman fort or a Saxon "burh." The latest view is that this method of defence is Early Norman, and that it was probably introduced, under Norman influence, in the reign of Edward the Confessor. The mound on which Knepp Castle stood is now considered to be another of these forts.[†] Among other Roman remains discovered in this neighbourhood were some pigs of lead, one of which is still preserved in Parham House. The inscription is—

TI. CL. TR. LVT. BR. EX. ARG.

which Hübner (*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*) interprets *Tiberii Claudii Trophimi Lutudense* (the last two words are only conjectural) *Britannicum ex argento*. Ti. Claudius Trophimus would probably be a freedman of the emperor, and in charge of the lead mines, which were always imperial property. The lead is stated to be

[†] For these interesting details see the article on "Ancient Earthworks" in the *Victoria History*, vol. i.

British, the exact locality being stated in the word conjectured to be Lutudense. *Ex argento* means that the lead had to be separated from the silver which was found in the same ore.

The return to Cocking is by a pleasant road, mostly keeping at the foot of the Downs, and passing several villages. After descending a short but break-neck hill from Bignor, we ascend again to Sutton, where the Church is of little importance, but shows some Transition-Norman columns in the nave, and sedilia and piscina worth seeing. It has a Decorated chancel, somewhat over-restored, but with a good east window. The road now keeps for miles at the foot of the Downs, leaving Barlavington church on the right, which also has Transition-Norman columns and a squint. The site of the old church of Duncton is just where the road to Petworth descends the hill, but the church itself has entirely disappeared. Another mile along a pleasant lane brings us to the delightful park of Lavington, otherwise called Wool Lavington, lying close under the Downs where they are wooded right to the top. This forms a magnificent background for the house, which is not in itself beautiful, but is interesting from its connection with Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Winchester, whose country seat was here. He had acquired the estate by his marriage in 1828 with Emily Sargent, whose brothers died without leaving children, so that the sister inherited. He was deeply attached to the beautiful scenery of this corner of Sussex, but its associations were presently saddened for him, for after thirteen years of happy wedded life his wife died in 1841. This sad undertone can be caught in a letter he sent to his sister in 1844. "Life here," he writes "is so unlike my life anywhere else. I was up alone on

the hillside between six and seven this morning, and anything more lovely you cannot conceive. The slanting sun was throwing its brightness from behind me on the glorious prospect, far up into Surrey, Albury, the Hog's Back, Leith Hill, &c., and all very distant country looks so beautiful—a sort of Delectable Mountain feeling hangs about it. I suppose it is the secret instinct after the land which is very far away which stirs within one." Or take this passage from his Life, referring to a much later period: "Always on returning to Lavington the first thing was to visit the churchyard and lay flowers on her grave; and after his last visit thither on May 31, 1873, so near to his own departure, he wrote to his daughter-in-law, describing the occasion as one never to be forgotten, 'God's world in its beauty, animate and inanimate, around me; the nightingales singing His praises, and all seeming to rejoice before Him.'" A month later he was thrown from his horse and killed, and now rests with his wife in the quiet Lavington churchyard behind the house, close to the church in which they were married, and where his pastoral staff has been fixed near the altar. Another passage may be quoted to show the Bishop in the more genial spirits which seem so natural to him. Dean Burgon thus describes his evening walks: "But it was on the charms of the pleasant landscape which surrounded his Sussex home that he chiefly expatiated on such occasions, leaning rather heavily on some trusty arm (I remember how he leant upon *mine!*), while he tapped with his stick the bole of every tree which came in his way (by the by, *every* tree seemed to be a favourite) and had something to tell of its history and surpassing merits. Every farmhouse, every peep at the distant landscape, every turn in the road, suggested

some pleasant remark or playful anecdote. The very cattle were greeted as old acquaintances, and how he did delight in discussing the flora of the neighbourhood, the geological features, every aspect of the history of the place." We have already noticed that he took a great interest in Sussex bird-life, and that he contributed to the *Quarterly Review* an article on Mr. A. E. Knox's *Ornithological Rambles*.

But the ecclesiastical associations of Lavington are yet only half described. In 1833 the Rectory was conferred on Henry Edward Manning, who before the end of the year married the sister of Wilberforce's wife, the ceremony being performed by Wilberforce himself in Lavington Church. In five years Mrs. Manning died here. Both men, therefore, had the same reason for their peculiar affection for Lavington, and it is pathetic to notice their different ways of expressing it. "Till the last six months," writes Manning in 1838, "I have never known what it is to have irresistible local affection. Once a little self-denial would have made all places alike; for all that makes one place differ from another would have followed me like a shadow. Now there is only one place unlike all others, and that is unchangeable."

Manning continued rector here till 1851, and here he preached his last sermon before he seceded to the Roman communion. Long years afterwards he refers to "the love I feel for the little church under a green hillside, where the morning and evening prayers and the music of the English Bible for seventeen years became a part of my soul." Amongst other interests he was an enthusiastic church-builder and a great lover of Gothic architecture, with a zeal which, as was only too often the case in his days, was not sufficiently tempered with the discretion

which spares ancient work because it is ancient. Of his interest in the new church at West Lavington I have already written. He also pulled down and rebuilt the little church of Lavington itself, so that its Early English work has far too modern an air. And directly we leave the park we reach another church, of which he was rector, in the pretty village of Graffham, and which was treated in the same way. This church was rebuilt a second time in 1875 in honour of Bishop Wilberforce, so that its Transition-Norman piers and lancet windows, though perhaps copies of the original work, are of no high degree of antiquity. It has, however, a fine ancient cylindrical font.

The road now leaves the Downs and pursues a circuitous route among the numerous fir woods and commons till it reaches Heyshott, a pleasant Down village, where there is another Early English church, with a curious old font and some inserted Perpendicular windows. Cocking is now a mile and a half distant.

The next ramble takes us northward from Midhurst over Bexhill Heath to Blackdown. The beautiful hills of the Lower Greensand, wherever they occur in England, always form a strikingly picturesque landscape. They consist mainly of wild uplands of heather, the sides of which are thickly clothed in woods of fir, beech, and birch. In Surrey, Kent, and Sussex they surround the Weald, forming an inner ring parallel to the chalk. The highest hills of the series are the Leith Hill range, the glory of south Surrey. These connect with the Hambledon Hills, and still further to the south-west with Hindhead, the range still continuing in Surrey. But here it takes a sudden turn eastward, which brings it into Sussex, where it forms Blackdown, the highest ground in the county. Then the range sweeps round again to

the south-west, forming a line of hills, or rather of elevated commons about 600 feet high, until it approaches Petersfield, when it turns definitely eastward for the last time, and forms the long line of Bexley Heath. The north road from Midhurst begins at once to ascend, and leads to the top of Bexley Heath by a long, tiresome ascent of two miles. The road runs pleasantly among woods, but there are no views. On the upper slopes of the hill the King's Sanatorium has been lately built, entirely surrounded by wood and heather. Directly we pass the top there is a striking view. The far side descends steeply into a little cup-shaped corner of the Weald, deep in which lies the pretty village of Fernhurst. Beyond it Blackdown displays its full stature, looking every inch of its 918 feet. Further off to the north-east is Leith Hill, and a wide view of the Weald extends east. The foreground is rendered beautiful by the extensive Verdly Forest, a sea of green into which our hill descends. The road to Blackdown takes us down the hill and through Fernhurst, which, however, though beautifully situated, has little to show us when we reach it. Some say the name should rather be Farnhurst, from the "farn" or marshy ground at the bottom of the valley. The church has two small Norman windows and an old font, but is mostly restored. Blackdown is now hardly more than a mile distant "as the crow flies"; but, to adopt Archbishop Temple's famous remark, the ordinary tourist "isn't a crow and can't fly," so that he will have some difficulty in finding a route to the top. Those who are walking had better take the next lane, and when it ceases to be any further use, make the best of their way across country. But the cyclist, who has to stick to the road, will have to go uphill nearly to Haslemere before he finds a turn to

the right leading to the hill. When at length, after a long *détour*, the top is attained, it will be found to be an extensive plateau of dark heather, parts of which seem to be burnt regularly every summer. There are a few firs on the top, but all the woods cluster thickly on the sloping sides. The main interest of the hill arises from it having been the home for twenty-four years of our last great poet, and the scene of his death on October 6, 1892. Tennyson, indeed, never abandoned his earlier home at Farringford, but the growth of the neighbouring Freshwater as a watering-place induced him to seek for a second retreat and one more secure from intrusion during the months when the Isle of Wight is crowded with visitors. With this object he purchased in 1867 Blackhorse Copse under the eastern slope of Blackdown as a site for his new mansion of Aldworth. Lady Tennyson thus describes an early visit they made to the spot: "At last we reached the charming ledge on the heathery down. This looks over an immense view bounded by the South Downs on the south and by Leith Hill on the north. Copse-wood surrounds the ledge, and the hill protects it from the north-west. The foxglove was in full bloom!" On April 23, 1868, Shakespeare's birthday, the foundation-stone was laid, bearing the inscription: "Prosper Thou the work of our hands; O prosper Thou our handywork." In August the house was finished and the family took possession.

The two poems in which the Laureate refers to his Sussex home are of deep interest. The dedication to his wife of the "Death of *CEnone*," entitled "June bracken and heather," clearly refers to Blackdown.[†]

[†] Mr. E. V. Lucas was, I believe, the first to point this out, and I think there can be no doubt that he is right. The date of the poem must be June, 1890, and from Hallam Tennyson's diary it

"There on the top of the down,
 The wild heather round me, and over me June's high blue,
 When I looked at the bracken so bright, and the heather
 so brown,
 I thought to myself I would offer the book to you,
 This, and my love together,
 To you that are seventy-seven,
 With a faith as clear as the heights of the June-blue
 heaven,
 And a fancy as summer-new
 As the green of the bracken amid the gloom of the
 heather."

So far for Blackdown in summer. The other poem, quoted in Lord Tennyson's Life, is a late autumn picture, and describes the view eastward over the Weald as it had been seen by the poet and Sir Edward Hamley, when the latter visited Aldworth in November, 1883. The lines were afterwards sent to Sir Edward as a memorial of his visit :—

"Our birches yellowing, and from each
 The light leaf falling fast,
 While squirrels from our fiery beech
 Were bearing off the mast,
 You came, and looked, and loved the view
 Long known and loved by me,
 Green Sussex fading into blue
 With one gray glimpse of sea."

Where the "gray glimpse" was it is hard to say definitely. Probably it was near Littlehampton, and seen over the Arundel gap in the Downs. I can imagine no other part of the sea which could be in view from Blackdown. It is worth noticing that, beautiful as this fine view is, the whole of Western

appears that on June 23rd the poet was at Aldworth, and working at "The Churchwarden," which was published in the same volume as "The Death of Cænone."

Sussex being spread out before us, between Leith Hill and the South Downs, it has one fault, the absence of water. Tennyson himself said that there ought to be "a full-fed river winding through the landscape." Before leaving the hill it is worth while to walk to the southern edge to gain the retrospective view over the woods of Bexley Hill, with the Midhurst Downs behind.

The walk or ride back to Midhurst may be varied by taking a road more to the west, by Linchmere and Linch. The route, however, is intricate, and there is nothing first-rate to see. Linchmere is beautifully situated on the top of the high sand-ridge which curves from Blackdown to Bexley Hill, enclosing the deep circular hollow in which Fernhurst lies. It has a well-placed but plain Early English church, with one blocked-up arch indicating Norman work. The tower is debased (1656). At the foot of the hill we pass Shulebrede Priory. Unfortunately it is now a private house, and entrance is not to be obtained.¹ Facts of this kind sometimes make the traveller feel that incidents such as the fire which has reduced Cowdray to a shell, and the dismantling of Hurstmonceaux Castle, are not without some compensation in public advantage. When we read in the paper that "Sir Gorgius Midas has bought the well-known ruins of Blankchester Castle, and intends to restore them to their mediæval splendour," we may add with a sigh, "Yes, and henceforth the public will be jealously excluded, or at most be allowed to file round the mansion in procession one day a week." It is, however, it must be admitted, difficult to reconcile public and private claims in such matters; and it is clear that the owner of a historic house cannot tolerate the invasion of

¹ The following tirade is now misplaced, the present owner (1922) being friendly to antiquaries.

tourists at all hours of the day. Shulebrede Monastery was founded in the thirteenth century for Augustinian canons, and was suppressed under Henry VIII., but more than a decade before Cromwell's Commissioners began their visitations. The existing buildings contain two ancient rooms of great interest. On the ground floor is the monks' room, which had groined vaulting, springing from two Early English marble pillars. It has now been cut into two, part of it being the hall, and part the dairy, which shows one of these pillars in the centre. A winding staircase leads up to the prior's room, in which there are some famous frescoes. Only one of these, representing the Nativity, dates with absolute certainty from pre-Reformation times. The Virgin and Child are surrounded by animals, in whose mouths labels are put, turning their natural voices into articulate speech. The cock crows "Christus natus est," the duck quacks "Quando, quando," to whom the croak of the raven replies, "In hac nocte." The cow lows "Ubi? Ubi?" and the lamb bleats in answer, "Bethlem, Bethlem." Most of the other frescoes are obviously later, for one represents three women in the dress of Queen Elizabeth, and another the royal arms of James I. Others are scenes of country amusements. There are two views of the Priory itself, and over the door what seems to be the story of the fox and the crow.

Linch Church is further south. It has an old window of painted glass, but is otherwise of no interest.

Another way of returning from Blackdown, a good deal longer but very pleasant, would be, instead of turning down to Linchmere, to keep on the road, passing Linchmere Common. This traverses high ground for some time, along the hills which curve round from Blackdown to Bexley Heath. As the tops

of these hills are mostly wild common, this road is extremely charming, and it commands wide views both into Sussex and Hampshire. After passing Linchmere Common, the road crosses a corner of Hampshire, rather near Liphook Station. Then it again crosses into Sussex, and joins the main London and Portsmouth road, just south of Wheat-sheaf Common. Adjoining it is the glorious Chapel Common, named from Milland Chapel, which is a quaint little church with an old piscina and credence-table, but otherwise no architectural features. It is said to date from the Perpendicular period. Near it is a new church, in which has been placed the bowl of the old font. It is strange to meet these churches beside a common, on a hill-top, with no houses near them. The road now passes the hamlet of Rake, and just afterwards rises to a most beautiful view-point, from which the Bexley Heath range is seen to great advantage. Rake will be unknown to most visitors, but, as it lies on the western boundary, it has been lately mentioned by Rudyard Kipling, when roughly and alliteratively indicating the limits of the county of his choice :—

“Choose ye your need from Thames to Tweed,
And I will choose instead
Such lands as lie 'twixt Rake and Rye,
Blackdown and Beachy Head.”

Soon after this we cross into Hampshire again, and in three miles reach Petersfield, where the train can be taken back to Midhurst.

Yet another route for reaching Midhurst would be to descend on the east side of Blackdown, a ramble only practicable for pedestrians, and pass by Lurgashall and Lodsworth. Lurgashall Church has some

traces of old herring-bone work, which may be Saxon, a curious outside wooden gallery, and a marble font dated 1661. The number of fonts in Sussex which date from the early years of Charles II. is quite remarkable, and seems to point to the rule of the Puritans, when the old font was liable to be broken up, or at least turned out of the church and degraded to secular uses. Lodsworth has an ancient manor-house, but its church has been spoilt by restoration, all but the west doorway. Soon after passing the village, we turn right and return by Cowdray Park.

Our last ramble from Midhurst is westward in the direction of Petersfield, along a perfectly ideal road for the cyclist, with a surface of the smoothest order and no stiff gradients, so that there is nothing to distract attention from its beautiful surroundings. Mile after mile it ascends the Little Rother valley, affording glimpses of the stream at intervals, but mostly skirting the woods, and threading the fascinating commons with which this district is thickly interlaced, while three miles to the south the waving line of the South Downs is a constant companion all the way, and invites the eye again and again to dwell on its varied beauties. The villages passed are pleasing, but, with the exception of Trotton, of no great interest.

Soon after leaving Midhurst the road ascends a slight hill, with Midhurst Common on the left. Then on the same side occur extensive woods, while on the right are beautiful views over the Rother to Bexley Heath. Presently the woods stop at a bridge over a small tributary to the Rother, and we ascend to Trotton Common, a glorious stretch of breezy heather. At the next cross-roads the pleasing village of Stedham is close on the right, where the churchyard has a yew-tree of monumental size. Its girth was 28 feet some

years ago, and now may be considerably greater. Crowhurst yew is, I believe, its only superior in Sussex. Stedham Church is restored Early English.

Returning to the main road, we drop in a mile to Trotton. Here we cross the Rother, which has run for some distance on our right. The road passes over an old fifteenth-century bridge, with buttresses on either side, and ribbed arches. Through it the Rother ripples and sparkles like a mountain stream, in a way very unusual among the sluggish rivers of Sussex. On the further bank rises Trotton Church, a building of which the interest, always considerable, has been much increased by the careful restoration lately conducted by Mr. P. M. Johnston. It is always gratifying to come across a restoration which really deserves the name, and which is neither, as is far too often the case, a replacement of old work by new, which the architect apparently considers its equal or superior, nor, still worse, a defacement and obliteration of historical features. The church has often been misread, but the features are now plain for all to see. The earliest part is the tower, which is good Early English with lancet windows,¹ and the usual Sussex cap. The rest of the church dates from the Geometrical period. The two-light windows, though plain for the style, are almost unique in Sussex, where Geometrical work is extremely rare. There is a large Decorated piscina, a square, low-side window discovered at the restoration, of which the grating has been left unglazed, and some remarkable frescoes, also lately discovered, in particular the curious representations of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Seven Christian Virtues, on the west wall. Similar frescoes are found

¹ I find that Mr. Johnston, whose opinion is entitled to the greatest weight, considers it coeval with the rest of the church,

Not a favourable specimen of Collins's verse, it must be allowed. To confuse the Arun with the Little Rother, and to call either of them "wild," argues less acquaintance with Sussex scenery than might be expected in a native of Chichester, and the rest of the imagery is quite conventional. Knowledge of "the female heart" refers to the heroines of *Venice Preserved* and *The Orphan*, Otway's two tragedies, which I imagine now find few readers. The reference to the Ilissus implies a comparison between Euripides and Otway, which is surely hardly complimentary to the former.

The next village on the road is Terwick, where the church is of a type characteristic of many West Sussex villages, mainly Early English, but with a Norman chancel arch. In the churchyard is a broken cross, a rarity in the county. A mile or so further is Rogate, where the fine church, of which the oldest part seems Transition-Norman, has been over-restored. Two miles further and we pass the scanty ruins of Dureford Abbey. We are now close to the Hampshire border, a short distance across which lies Petersfield.

The return may be by a road which keeps north of the Little Rother the whole way, by Chithurst, Iping, and Woolbeding. Chithurst has a quaint little church with a rude Early Norman chancel arch and a curious almsdish, showing figures of Adam, Eve, and the serpent. Near the church a farmhouse with mullioned windows and some old carving marks the site of a priory. Iping Church is modern, but rests on Norman foundations. Woolbeding House is an old mansion, now largely modernised, which is built at one of the very prettiest spots in the Little Rother valley. It is surrounded by fine gardens, of which

those to the west of the house can be seen from the road, a blaze in summer of flowers of all hues, shaded by a large cedar. North of the house is an octagonal marble fountain, with a bronze figure of Neptune, which was brought here from Cowdray. The little church is close to the house, and is approached by a walk of yew-trees, many of which are clipped, though those nearest the church are allowed to grow naturally. The edifice has been rebuilt, but there are some pilaster strips outside the nave which look as if they might be Saxon. Midhurst is now only two miles distant.

CHAPTER IV

THE PETWORTH ROAD

Petworth, Fittleworth, Stopham, and Pulborough

THOUGH we are now bound eastward, we must first leave Midhurst by the north road. In a mile, at the very gates of Cowdray Park, we reach the village of Easebourne. Here, in the rebuilt church, is the fine tomb of Anthony Browne, first Viscount Montague, chief standard-bearer of England and ambassador to Queens Mary and Elizabeth. He died, as we have already seen, in 1592, the year after Elizabeth had been his guest at Cowdray. The church also contains an armed effigy of Sir David Owen, died 1540. The font is Transition-Norman. A little to the south are the small ruins of a nunnery founded in the thirteenth century. It seems to have been used as a sort of refuge or reformatory for girls of aristocratic families, who had shown vicious or rebellious tendencies. The object, however, was perhaps to keep these troublesome young ladies out of the way, rather than to make them behave well. Consequently the discipline of the institution was not particularly successful, and the many scandalous tales told of the extravagance and immorality of the nuns apparently rest on better authority than such stories usually do.

The Petworth road now strikes off eastward, passing

for nearly two miles through Cowdray Park. This part of the road is perfectly charming. At present we are bound for Petworth, but on a hot summer day there are few things more delightful than to lie on the smooth grass under the fine trees, with a book which one does not read, because the occupation of watching the lights and shadows shift on the Downs across the valley proves more fascinating. After leaving the park, the road runs for a while deep in a sandstone cutting. The next turn (right) leads to Selham, down in the valley, a *détour* to be recommended, for the church exhibits Norman and Early English, mixed up in the ordinary West Sussex style. In particular, notice the Norman chancel-arch, resting on quaintly carved and richly ornamented capitals. Returning to the Petworth road, we proceed further eastward to Tillington, where the church has two good arcades of Transition-Norman, and a font of the same period. At Pitshill are kept the silver watch, tablets, and other articles given by Charles I. to Sir T. Herbert. Petworth is now only one mile distant, the road to it running along the south wall of the park.

Petworth is a large village with narrow, crooked streets, which has grown up round the great house and park, for many centuries the home of a noble family. At the Norman conquest it was part of the estate given to Roger de Montgomery. When his troublesome son, Robert de Bellême, forfeited his rights by treason, Henry I. gave Petworth as well as Arundel to Queen Adeliza. She gave it to her brother Josceline of Louvain, who took the name of Percy on marrying Agnes, heiress of the Percies. Thus Petworth became one of the estates of the great Percy family, though never so intimately associated with it as their principal seat in Alnwick, Northumberland.

A sword kept here is traditionally assigned to Harry Hotspur, and it is clear that his widow must have been staying here when she met her second husband, Lord Camoys, whose tomb we have just seen at Trotton. But we hear little of the Percies in connection with Petworth until the seventeenth century, when the ninth Earl of Northumberland, released in 1621, after sixteen years' imprisonment for alleged complicity in the Gunpowder Plot, lived in retirement here for the rest of his life, and was buried in the church. After him the tenth Earl, who lived in the reign of Charles I. and played the part of a mediator in the Civil War, was buried here ; and also the eleventh Earl, Josceline, with whom the male line of the Percies came to an end in 1670. He left a daughter, who married the sixth Duke of Somerset, and had thirteen children, all of whom, except one boy and three girls, died young. On the grand staircase of Petworth House she is depicted in a triumphal car with her three daughters. Her son Algernon inherited the family property, and was created Earl of Northumberland, but on his death (1750) the estates were divided. Alnwick went to his son-in-law, Sir Hugh Smithson, who presently assumed the name Percy, and was created Duke of Northumberland (the present family). But Petworth fell to Sir Charles Wyndham, second Earl of Egremont, whose father had married Katharine, one of the three daughters of the sixth Duchess of Somerset. He was a statesman of some prominence at the end of George II.'s reign and in the early years of George III. His successor, George O'Brien Wyndham, third Earl of Egremont (died 1839), was a man of remarkable character and energy, who set his mark on Petworth in many ways. For one thing he was a great builder. Not only did he largely alter the great house, which

had been already rebuilt by the Duke of Somerset, but he restored the parish church, and built the market cross and the schools. His zeal was indeed commendable, but he had the misfortune to live at a time when style in architecture was sadly to seek, and all his buildings are hideous. Fortunately for Petworth, it can show several picturesque old buildings as well, in particular the seventeenth-century almshouses.

The church has lately been rebuilt, and certainly any change cannot fail to be for the better. The principal monuments in it also recall the third Earl of Egremont. His own is very conspicuous—a large sitting figure, by no means without dignity. Hard by is a monument he set up to the memory of the three Earls of Northumberland who are buried in the church. It is inscribed "*Mortuis moriturus,*" and is the work of a sculptor named Carew—"not an Academician, to the Academy's shame," as the inscription further states. In spite of this claim the work is not of high merit. Carew was one of a band of artists to whom Lord Egremont delighted to extend patronage. He was the most genial of patrons, and many are the stories told of his unconventionality and hatred of ceremony. Many of these anecdotes come from Charles Robert Leslie, who was regularly invited to the house every year after 1826. In 1834 Constable was Lord Egremont's guest. Flaxman was commissioned by him to make two statues, now in the sculpture gallery. Turner was quite domiciled here. He was given a studio in the house, and painted more than one view of the park. Indeed, Lord Egremont was one of the first to appreciate Turner's genius, and many of the great painter's best works will be found in the picture gallery. This celebrated collection of pictures, the



PETWORTH PARK

From the picture by J. M. W. Turner in the National Gallery

finest private one in the kingdom, was begun by the second Lord Egremont, but was largely added to by the third Lord. It contains specimens of the work of nearly every name famous in painting. Besides the fine collection of Turners, it is specially rich in Vandycks and Holbeins, and contains some pictures which are world-famous, such as the "Jacob and Laban" of Claude Lorraine. It is a great privilege that the general public should be admitted twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, to see the pictures. Unless, however, the visitor has cultivated the American art of rapid sightseeing, his impressions will be confused, since only an hour is allowed for seeing three hundred pictures.

The interest of Petworth centres so naturally round Lord Egremont that I have insensibly passed from the story of its family to a description of the place. A few more words are required to explain why the present owner is a Lord Leconfield. When the third Earl of Egremont died his title passed to a nephew, with whom it became extinct. But the estate was left to his adopted son, George Wyndham, afterwards created Baron Leconfield. The present owner is the third baron.

Westward and northward of the house stretches the extensive park. In size and magnificence it takes a place as one of the five great parks of West Sussex, but in charm it yields to the other four—Arundel, Goodwood, Cowdray, and Parham. The part near the house, though containing a lake which Turner thought worth sketching, is somewhat flat and tame, but the higher and wilder part to the north is more pleasing. At its highest point is a Prospect Tower, near which is the Ravens' Clump, where a pair of these birds bred for years among

the Scotch firs, as Mr. Knox has chronicled in his *Ornithological Rambles*. The adventures of these ravens are perhaps the most amusing part of Mr. Knox's book, and were quoted *in extenso* in Bishop Wilberforce's review. The climax was when "an Argus-eyed schoolboy" raided the nest and carried off all four "squabs," as the young ones were called. The parent birds deserted the nest, but when, some time afterwards, the young birds were discovered, Mr. Knox decided to replace one of them in the nest "on the idea that it was just possible that this might have the effect of attracting the attention of either of the old birds, if they should happen to revisit the neighbourhood." The experiment was successful, and the pair of ravens were allowed after this to inhabit the clump in peace and security. Bishop Wilberforce, however, adds that, in the spring of 1849 they migrated to Parham Park.

Northward from Petworth stretches one of the best roads in Sussex, which, after passing one village of little importance, North Chapel—where the font is dated 1662—crosses into Surrey. In former times the road was noted for its badness, so that royal and other distinguished visitors to Petworth House often got stuck in the mud, or had their coaches upset. "When Prince George of Denmark," writes Macaulay, "visited the stately mansion of Petworth in wet weather, he was six hours in going nine miles; and it was necessary that a body of sturdy hinds should be on each side of his coach, in order to prop it. Of the carriages which contained his retinue, several were upset and injured. A letter from one of his gentlemen-in-waiting has been preserved, in which the unfortunate courier complains that during fourteen hours he never alighted, except when his coach was overturned or

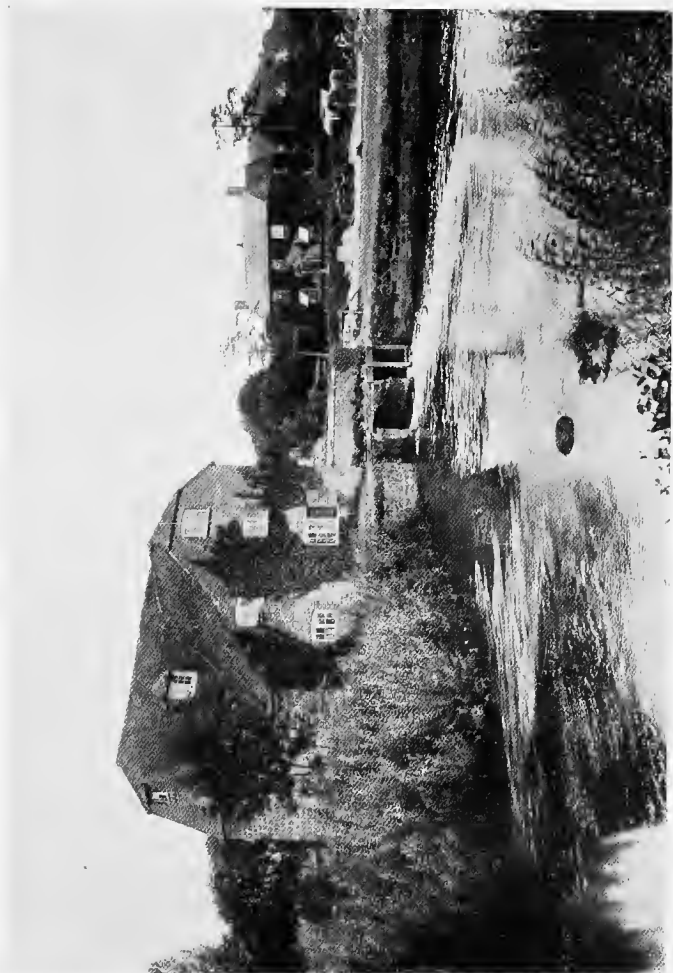
stuck fast in the mud." This state of things was remedied by the third Earl of Egremont, one of whose most useful works was to initiate the repairing of this road with the local ironstone, usually called "Sussex clinkers," to which its present excellence is due.

Southward the railway station and the Rother Valley are a mile and a half distant, a journey which may be made with the maximum of discomfort in the little Petworth omnibus. A mile south of the railway is another grand domain, Burton Park, with a tiny church at its centre. It has few architectural features, though some herring-bone work shows that it is an ancient structure, but contains three splendid tombs to members of the Goring family, who were formerly lords of the manor. One is a Decorated tomb with a female effigy; the other two are altar-tombs of the sixteenth century.

Taking the road just north of Burton Park, we first pass Coates, a village with a little church typical of West Sussex. It is mainly Early English, but retains a plain Norman chancel-arch and a Transition-Norman font, the latter of the type so common in this part of the county. One mile further and we turn northward again past Fittleworth Station to Fittleworth, a place which has of late been gaining in popularity with holiday-makers. The lower part of the village is on the Little Rother, here in its happiest and gayest mood. Very pleasant it is on a fine summer evening to lean on the old bridge and watch the artists drawing the picturesque mill with its foaming water and the sun sinking slowly behind; or the mostly unsuccessful efforts of the anglers to lure the fish from the bright waters. The rest of Fittleworth lies on higher ground to the north, amid

sandy commons and fir woods—a pleasant, breezy region, where a man's bairns may play safely, while he himself is trying to entice the wily trout. The Early English church, though simple, is well worth entering, for the chancel is good old work, which has escaped the hand of the restorer. Inside there are a good Perpendicular font and a coffin lid with a curious Greek cross on it.

The course of the Little Rother is now all but run, for near the next village on our road, Stopham, it flows into the larger, but far less interesting, Arun. Just before the junction the Arun is crossed by Stopham Bridge, a fine fourteenth-century structure of many arches. Above and below the bridge, the banks of the Arun are covered with trees, the result being that it shows more beauty than usual, the greater part of its course being singularly uninteresting. In the angle between the two rivers is the ancestral mansion of the Barttelots, one of the most ancient among Sussex families, of which Sir Walter Barttelot is the head. To appreciate its antiquity, we may turn to the pretty church of Stopham, which is pleasantly situated along trees some way to the west of the Arun. The original building, with its round-headed doors and arches, was at least early Norman, possibly even Saxon, but the windows illustrate all the three later styles. We are reminded of the Barttelot family at every turn. The east window is full of old glass, comprising six shields of the family. There is a magnificent series of family brasses, starting with 1428, and showing eleven figures besides other smaller plates. Also the walls are full of monuments, the most recent being those to Sir Walter Barttelot, died 1892, and his son, Major Barttelot, who was treacherously shot in his search for Stanley (1888).



FITTELVORTH MILL

One mile further, and the road takes us to Pulborough, which we have already reached by Stane Street. Besides the antiquities chronicled in Chapter III., Pulborough contains one of the largest churches in West Sussex, which stands finely on the summit of a low hill, and is reached by an old lych-gate. The chancel is Early English and the nave Perpendicular, a combination rare in a Sussex church. It contains a Norman font, fine Perpendicular sedilia, and four good brasses. Near it are the remains of Old Place, a fifteenth-century manor-house. There is at Pulborough another ancient bridge over the Arun. The number of these old bridges in the western part of the county is remarkable. There are nine in all—three over the Arun, at Stopham, Pulborough, and Houghton, and six over the Little Rother, at Rogate, Trotton, Iping, Woolbeding, Midhurst, and Fittleworth. At Hardham, one mile south, there are some small, but very beautiful, remains of an ancient priory. The parts remaining are some ruins of the chapter-house, which show at the west end some very pretty and delicate Early English arcading, and a cellar with a groined roof, which is supposed to have been underneath the refectory. The little parish church is Norman and Early English.

At Pulborough we strike the Mid-Sussex railway, which in about half an hour will convey us southward to our next centre, Arundel, passing *en route* some places of interest on which a little more may be said presently. But two or three of the less important places in the Arun valley may be dismissed here with a few words. Greatham has a small and plain Early English church. Cold Waltham has a restored church mainly Decorated, remarkable for little except that the pillars of its arcades, like those of Harting,

Rustington, and Slindon, have no capitals. Bury has a church which shows a little Transition-Norman work, and has a stoup and Perpendicular screen and font. All these villages lie close to the Arun, which between Pulborough and the Downs runs in an absolutely flat valley. The soil, so far as it is not alluvial, is formed by the Gault clay, which in the rest of Sussex is an insignificant strip, but here only widens so as to affect the scenery.

CHAPTER V

ARUNDEL AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

Arundel — Bognor and the South-west — Littlehampton, Worthing, and the South-east

THERE are three spots in Sussex pre-eminently marked out by nature as defensible positions, on which castles have stood from time immemorial. They are Arundel, Bramber, and Lewes, the strategical points commanding the narrow gorges which the Rivers Arun, Adur, and Ouse cut through the chalk Downs. Since these gorges are in themselves among the most picturesque natural features of the county, historical interest in these three cases is much enhanced by beauty of scenery. In some respects Arundel differs from the other two. Bramber and Lewes command the northern part of their respective gorges, where the Adur and Ouse first enter the Downs ; whereas Arundel commands the southern exit of the Arun, where it issues into the flat plain lying between the Downs and the sea. Such a position in the case of the Adur and the Ouse would involve a lack of picturesqueness, since in these gorges, as also in that of the Cuckmere (where the castle was also at the entrance), the beauty is concentrated at the northern end. But the Arun forms by far the finest of the four gorges, since it is beautiful throughout its length, and not merely at the

north end. Add to this that while Bramber and Lewes Castles are ruins, and the former has almost entirely disappeared, Arundel Castle is still the house of the Duke of Norfolk, the representative of the illustrious family of Howard.

When William the Conqueror portioned out Sussex among his followers, he divided it into six rapes, a peculiar word, as to the meaning and derivation of which antiquaries are still uncertain. These rapes were more or less parallel strips of country running from north to south, and each contained a seaport and a castle to defend it. The capital of the first rape was Chichester, with the port Bosham; of the second, Arundel, with Littlehampton; of the third, Bramber, with Shoreham; of the fourth, Lewes, with Seaford; of the fifth, Pevensey; and of the sixth, Hastings. Four of these were assigned, originally, each to one baron, but the two western rapes of Chichester and Arundel were placed under the rule of the same lord, Roger de Montgomery. This arrangement soon led to trouble. In Henry I.'s time Roger's son, the powerful and turbulent Robert of Bellême, revolted from the King. Henry blockaded Arundel Castle, which presently surrendered to him, but the main struggle between the King and his rebellious subject was at Bridgenorth Castle, in Shropshire. The Sussex estates were forfeited to the Crown, and bestowed by Henry on his second wife, Queen Adeliza. In 1139 the Empress Matilda landed in England at Littlehampton, and was welcomed at Arundel by Queen Adeliza. Stephen at once invested the castle, but imprudently allowed Matilda to retire to her friends at Bristol—an act of good-nature and courtesy to a lady for which he doubtless afterwards bitterly reproached himself. The castle passed in 1243, by marriage, from the descendants

of the Queen to the Fitzalans, a vigorous and warlike family, who held the manor for nearly three centuries and a half, until 1580, mostly with the title of Earls of Arundel. That the castle was never besieged during their rule is rather remarkable, for many of them took a prominent part in national troubles. A John Fitzalan was among the barons who confederated against King John ; his son wavered long between Henry III. and the Barons, but finally took the King's side, was made prisoner at the battle of Lewes, and required by de Montfort to surrender either his son or his castle as a pledge of good faith ; a third was one of the very few barons who adhered to Edward II. against Isabella, by whom he was captured and executed. But the best known of the family is Richard Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel, who was one of the five lords appellant, and was seized and executed when the long deferred day of Richard II.'s vengeance came in 1397. His tomb is shown in Chichester Cathedral ; but there is some difficulty in understanding how this can be, for history relates that he was buried "in the church of the Augustinian friars." After his death he was regarded as a saint, very much to King Richard's disgust, and pilgrimages were made to his tomb. One story told by Holinshed is that Richard had his grave opened to refute the belief that his decapitated head had miraculously been joined on to his body. After this Richard is said to have destroyed or obliterated his grave, in order to stop the pilgrimages. The "tomb" in Chichester Cathedral consists only of the effigies of the Earl himself and his wife, which about sixty years ago were discovered bricked up in the Cathedral wall, and have been set on a new altar-tomb. But how they came into the Cathedral, and what connection they have with the original tomb are puzzling questions. The Earl was

himself a great builder. He rebuilt the parish church, in the chancel of which most of his successors lie buried, and founded at the same time a college of canons close to the church, the buildings of which still remain, but too obviously restored. A small almshouse, called *Maison Dieu*, close to the bridge over the Arun, is also his work. It was destroyed by Waller at the great siege of the castle, and only a few shapeless ruins remain.

Many of the other Fitzalans might be mentioned as illustrious statesmen and warriors, but we must now pass on to Henry Fitzalan, the last Earl of Arundel, a politician who took a prominent part in securing the succession of Mary Tudor and frustrating the designs of Northumberland. He was rewarded with the staff of Lord Steward, which he retained under Elizabeth. One recorded speech of his to that fiery Queen quite makes us shake in our shoes even at this distance of time. "If your Majesty," he is reported to have said, "intends to govern England with your caprices and fancies, your nobility will be forced to interfere." It is no wonder, if this is a fair specimen of his talk, that his career was somewhat chequered and that he was placed under arrest two or three times, though he managed more than once to regain the Queen's favour.

After his death in 1580 the estate passed to his grandson, Philip Howard, fifth Duke of Norfolk, the son of his daughter Mary and her husband, Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, who had been executed by Elizabeth in 1572. The estate has remained in the Howard family ever since.

In the great Civil War the castle was garrisoned for the King and sustained the fiercest siege that it had yet experienced at the hands of Sir William Waller, who captured it after seventeen days in December, 1643.

This siege and Waller's taking of Chichester are about the only important events which connect Sussex with the Civil War. Among the thousand prisoners taken was the divine, Chillingworth, whose subsequent death and burial at Chichester have already been related. The castle was reduced to a heap of ruins and much neglected until the tenth Duke rebuilt it on a large scale in 1791. A castle built at that date was not likely to be an architectural success, and the present Duke has probably judged wisely in rebuilding the whole in the style of the thirteenth century. The effect is somewhat solemn and ecclesiastical and the buildings still look very new. Their situation on the hillside is decidedly effective, but the huge structure looks somewhat disproportioned to the rest of the town.

No visitors are allowed in the inhabited parts of the castle, but little is lost by the prohibition, for, with the exception of some portraits by Holbein and Vandyck, there are few family treasures of much importance. All that is of real interest can be seen; the ancient keep and other ruins are on view twice a week, and, above all, the glorious park is open for all to ramble in, and not even cyclists and picnickers are objected to. When viewing the ruins, we pass through first an Edwardian outer tower with drawbridge and portcullis, behind which is the clock tower, the lower part of which is Norman. Next we ascend to an open walk on a wall, leading to another (probably) Edwardian tower, which is square in shape. Exactly behind this is the great circular Norman keep, by far the most interesting of the ruins. Before the time of tourists its old walls were inhabited by a colony of owls, which attracted the attention of our friend, Mr. A. E. Knox. "The fact," he says, "that these birds have here not only performed the duties of incubation, but even

reared their young occasionally, is the only instance, I believe, on record of any bird of prey breeding when deprived of its liberty." The most solemn and dignified of the tribe was named Lord Thurlow, and there is a well-known anecdote that when the Duke and his family were at breakfast a butler entered and gravely announced, "Please, your Grace, Lord Thurlow has laid an egg." The only remains of this colony are the stuffed forms of the owls which stare back at the staring visitor to the keep.

From the battlements of the keep there is a bird's-eye view over the exterior of the whole castle and splendid views both up and down the Arun. To the north is a barbican called Bevis' tower, after the giant Bevis of Hampton, who is said to have been warder at the castle.

Arundel Park may safely be pronounced the most beautiful in Sussex, though it has rivals as formidable as Goodwood, Cowdray, and Parham. It stretches northward for two miles, completely covering the hill which stands westward of the Arun gorge, and sending down a succession of hanging woods to the banks of the stream itself. The most charming part is the valley, in the lower end of which lies Swanbourne lake. Indeed, the view across the lake, with the castle towers appearing over the rich hanging woods, is one of the most exquisite pictures which Sussex affords.

But the interest of Arundel is still far from exhausted. The parish church was, in 1880, the subject of a remarkable lawsuit, in which the Duke of Norfolk, who is a Roman Catholic, laid claim to the chancel as his own private property, and established his contention. Accordingly, a wall has been built separating the chancel from the rest of the church, and the altar has been placed just west of the wall. The whole



church is graceful Early Perpendicular, of a type of which Sussex shows few instances. Its stately proportions are good, and it contains a beautiful stone pulpit and font, and some curious frescoes representing the Seven Deadly Sins and the Seven Works of Mercy. The dividing of the church in half goes far to spoil it. The visitor must apply beforehand to the gate-keeper at the top of High Street, and pay sixpence to gain entrance to the chancel. This, with the Lady-chapel leading out of it, is very well worth seeing, for it contains a fine and most interesting series of Fitzalan tombs, from 1415 to 1580. Another building to be inspected is the large and handsome Roman Catholic Church of St. Philip Neri, which was built about thirty years ago, in a striking situation, dominating the rest of the town.

It seems so natural at present to connect the Dukes of Norfolk with Roman Catholicism, that it may be interesting to relate that at least two of the Dukes have been stout Protestant champions. The first was the seventh Duke, who was ordered by James II. to carry the sword of state before him to a Romanist chapel. The Duke stopped outside the door, on which the King somewhat angrily remarked, "My Lord, your father would have gone further"; to which he rejoined, "Your Majesty's father was the better man, and he would not have gone so far." The other, the eleventh Duke, was hardly as respectable a representative of Protestantism. He was a great drunkard, generally known among his acquaintances as "Jockey of Norfolk," and not remarkable for personal cleanliness. The story runs that when he was complaining that he had tried every possible remedy for his rheumatism, Dudley North inquired "Pray, my lord, did you ever try a clean shirt?"

One fact of great interest in Arundel, on which I have not yet touched, is the visit of Charles II. during his flight after Worcester. But, as some deny that he came through Arundel at all, I have left the question for discussion in a later chapter.

It may seem a reversal of the natural order of things that Bognor and Littlehampton should be treated as places in the neighbourhood of Arundel, since most of the visitors to Arundel come from these two popular resorts. But the fact is that these watering-places, although their firm sands and safe sea-bathing makes them delightful to all children, and indeed to others who appreciate healthy sea-breezes, comparative quiet, and exceptionally sunny skies, offer little interest either to the antiquarian or the searcher after picturesqueness, and consequently will need but little description. Accordingly, in passing from Arundel to Bognor, I propose not to keep the shortest road, but to take a rambling course both in going and returning, so as not necessarily to visit every village, but to pick out those of most interest.

Starting westward from Arundel we shall find two villages lying on the southern slopes of the Downs—which deserve a visit—Slindon and Eartham. To reach them we have to diverge to the north of the Chichester road, and keep up on high ground. Slindon has a restored church, whose history offers some points of interest. It has a south aisle of Transition-Norman, an Early English chancel, and a Perpendicular north aisle, showing some of the strange columns which have no capitals. There is also a tomb with the wooden effigy of a knight. But the interest of the village lies rather in its picturesqueness, in its old Elizabethan hall, with hiding-places, and a Roman Catholic chapel, and in the glorious

beech-woods which encircle it. All this part of the Down country is indeed especially rich in beech-woods. A little to the north-east the road to Bury passes through Fair Mile Bottom, a Down valley sunk deep between the Rewell beech-woods on one side, stretching continuously from Arundel Park, and the tree-studded slopes of Dale Park on the other. In this direction we should reach Madehurst, where the church has been badly restored, but retains a Norman arch.

By going south from Slindon we should reach the churches of Binsted, which has some small original Norman windows, and Walberton, with traces of Saxon masonry, including Roman brick, a plain Norman nave, and an Early English chancel, and north porch. Our direction to-day, however, takes us north-west to the picturesque village of Eartham, also surrounded by beech-woods. Here, at the end of the eighteenth century, lived William Hayley, much esteemed as a poet in his own day, but now chiefly to be remembered as the friend of many celebrated men, such as Cowper, Blake, Gibbon, Romney, and Flaxman. He was the kindest and most hospitable of friends, and many of the above have been his guests. Gibbon called his home "the little Paradise of Eartham," and adds, "His place, though small, is as eloquent as his mind, which I value much more highly." On this Southey remarks (in his *Life of Cowper*), "The man of whom Gibbon could speak thus must have been no ordinary man."

Another guest was Anna Seward, the "Lichfield swan," a poetess whose works are now as completely forgotten as Hayley's own, but who was accustomed to receive much incense from her contemporaries, and in turn would express her own admiration in extravagant terms. Hayley to her is "the illustrious, the

graceful." The "log-rolling" of these poets has been amusingly satirised in Bishop Mansell's witty lines:—

Miss Seward: "Pride of Sussex!¹ England's Glory!

Mr. Hayley, that is you."

Mr. Hayley: "Ma'am, you carry all before ye.

Trust me, Lichfield swan, you do."

Miss Seward: "Ode dramatic, epic, sonnet—

Mr. Hayley, you're divine."

Mr. Hayley: "Ma'am, I'll give my word upon it,

You yourself are—all the Nine."

The next guest to be mentioned was of a very different kind. In February, 1792, Hayley, who was writing a Life of Milton, heard that Cowper was preparing an edition of the works of the same poet, and wrote him a letter warmly admiring his genius, and disclaiming all possible rivalry. This was the beginning of a friendship which ripened so rapidly, that in the ensuing summer the poet and Mrs. Unwin were actually persuaded to leave their beloved flats of North Buckinghamshire and pay Hayley a visit. To the retiring couple the three days' journey in a private coach appeared a most formidable undertaking, though Cowper half laughs at himself for his own trepidation. "A thousand lions, monsters, and giants are in the way," he writes, "but perhaps they will all vanish, if I have the courage to face them." The day before starting he wrote a letter to Hayley, beginning—

"Through floods and flames to your retreat

I win my desperate way,

And when we meet, if e'er we meet,

Will echo your huzza!"

¹ It would be interesting to ascertain whether the Bishop knew that this is the name given locally to the round-headed rampion, a beautiful flower growing on the Sussex Downs.

Late in the evening of August 1, 1792, the pair absolutely arrived—a great day in the annals of the little Sussex village. At first the hill scenery proved bewildering to the gentle poet of the Great Ouse plain. “I was myself,” he writes, “a little daunted by the tremendous height of the Sussex hills, in comparison with which all that I had seen elsewhere are dwarfs.” But he soon learnt to admire the situation of Hayley’s house. “The grounds,” he writes, “occupy three sides of a hill, which in Buckinghamshire might well pass for a mountain, and from the summit of which is beheld a magnificent landscape, bounded by the sea, and on one part by the Isle of Wight. The inland scene is equally beautiful, consisting of a large and deep valley, well cultivated and enclosed by magnificent hills, all crowned with wood.” But Sussex did not suit his genius, and during the six weeks he stayed with Hayley he practically wrote nothing. During part of his visit the artist Romney was also a guest at Eartham, and drew the well-known portrait of Cowper, for which the poet returned thanks in an equally well-known sonnet, written, however, after his return to Weston.

The friendship thus begun continued until Cowper’s death in 1800. In the same year Hayley was further saddened by the death of his natural son, who had been taken as an articled pupil by Flaxman. The beautiful monument to him in Eartham Church is from Flaxman’s hand, with an inscription by Hayley himself. A short time afterwards Hayley, whose lavish generosity had somewhat impoverished his estate, first let and presently sold Eartham, retiring to Felpham, near Bognor, to a cottage which he had built a few years before, and whither we shall presently follow him in the course of this ramble. The purchaser was

the ill-fated statesman Huskisson, killed at the opening of the first railway in 1830. We have seen already a statue to him in the Cathedral, and he also has a tablet in Eartham Church. Besides these two monuments the church has an excellent early Norman chancel arch, with smaller arches on each side. Otherwise the building is restored Early English and of little interest.

We now leave the hills and descend southward to the plain, which we shall keep for the rest of the ramble. A road nearly straight will take us to the sea-coast at Bognor, but it is well to diverge somewhat westward, to include the fine church of Aldingbourne. The principal points to note are the blocked Norman north arcade, the long row of Transition-Norman columns, the pretty Early English chapel, which is vaulted and shows dog-tooth moulding, the Early English sedilia, and the Norman font of the usual West Sussex pattern. The Early English church of Oving is also worth making a *détour* to see, but Merston church is of little interest.

Pagham is a little village on the coast, and lying quite four miles to the west of our present route. In spite of its out-of-the-way position, it is well worth a visit. The Early English church shows good work, probably due to one of the Archbishops of Canterbury, who were lords of the manor. About a mile short of the church, on the only road leading to it, is the hamlet of Nytimber, where the remains of an old Saxon manor-house have lately been discovered, with a small Early English chapel adjacent to it. This remarkable find I have not yet been privileged to see, so I have to be content to follow Mr. P. M. Johnston's account. The last time I was in its neighbourhood, I turned off on to the Bognor road, when Nytimber

was actually in sight, knowing nothing of the architectural treat I was missing.

A walk or ride over uninteresting flat country now brings us to Bognor, which, as I have already hinted, is admirably adapted for those to whom the pleasures of the sea are all-sufficient. The town was "created" towards the end of the eighteenth century by Sir Richard Hotham, a successful hatter, after whom it was awhile called Hothampton. When the Princess Charlotte was induced to visit it and patronise the sea-bathing, the fortunes of the new watering-place seemed assured. In common, however, with its rival Littlehampton, it has not expanded to the extent of the more successful watering-places in the east of the county. The reason may partly be the flatness of their surroundings, partly the inconvenience of being situated on branch railways. The principal interest of Bognor lies possibly in its success in repelling an encroaching sea. At low tide the water retires half a mile and exposes a reef of rocks, now the haunt of anemones and other sea-treasures eagerly collected by children, but once at some former time the line of the coast, and thus marking clearly how much land the sea has swept away. The whole coast is now defended by groynes, and the watering-place itself by the sea-wall below the esplanade. This has in former times been knocked about terribly by the sea, so that directly low water came a small army of workmen had to be sent to repair the breach before the next high tide. Of late years the wall has been more scientifically constructed, and I have been assured that these unpleasing accidents no longer take place. The spring tides occasionally, if impelled by a stormy wind, dash right over the esplanade into the streets of the town, and wash over the pier, but

no real damage is done. The air at Bognor is first-rate, and it is one of the most sunshiny places in England.

Bersted Church, a mile inland, is of some interest. A note in the church reads: "This Church, formerly Norman, and possibly Saxon in its origin, was in the main rebuilt in the Early English period, enlarged in the sixteenth century, and restored in 1881." The traces of Norman, it should be added, are chiefly confined to the tower, and the foundations of the tower are the only parts doubtfully claimed as Saxon.

The picturesqueness which Bognor lacks will hardly be found in the adjoining village of Felpham, but the human interest of the spot is considerable. In the church, which is very "mixed" in style (with Transition-Norman and Early English arcades, and windows ranging from lancet to Perpendicular), will be seen a tablet to the poet Hayley, who, as we have already seen, retired here after selling his Eartham estate. Though he is said to have lived in great seclusion, he was considered the lion of Bognor at the time when it was rising in fame as a watering-place, and we are told that even "princesses of the blood, when visiting Bognor, would go out of their way to see him."¹ But it was little suspected at the time that the real interest of Felpham would centre, not in Hayley, but in his *protégé*, William Blake. Blake had been introduced to Hayley by Flaxman, and Hayley (in 1800) had invited him to settle at Felpham while engaged in the work of illustrating some of Hayley's own books. On receiving this invitation Blake's delight at migrating to the country broke into song in some stanzas

¹ Gilchrist's *Life of Blake*, which is the main authority for the following account.

enclosed in a letter from his wife to Flaxman's wife, one of which is—

“Away to sweet Felpham, for Heaven is there ;
The ladder of angels descends through the air,
On the turret its spiral does softly descend,
Through the village then winds, at my cot it does end.”

His cottage is thus described by Gilchrist : “ It is still standing on the southern or seaward side of the village. It is really a cottage ; a long, shallow, white-faced house, one room deep, containing but six in all—small and cosy. Its lattice windows look to the front ; at back the thatched roof comes sweeping down almost to the ground. A thatched wooden verandah, which runs the whole length of the house, forming a covered way paved with red brick, shelters the lower rooms from the southern sun. In front lies the strip of garden enclosed by a low flint wall. Beyond, corn-fields stretch down to the sea, which is only a few furlongs distant.” “ Here,” as Blake wrote to Flaxman, “ heaven opens on all sides its golden gates ; voices of celestial inhabitants are more distinctly heard, and their forms more distinctly seen ! ” When walking by the shore he held converse with many a seer and poet of old—Moses and the Prophets, Homer, Dante, Milton—“ all,” as he said, “ majestic shadows, grey but luminous, and superior to the common height of man.” All these statements are highly characteristic of Blake, whose genius had in a remarkable degree the strange power of bringing vividly before his eye and ear the creatures of his imagination, as though they were real objects. He does not seem to have understood that this was an unusual gift. “ You can see what I do, if you choose,”

he once said to a friend. "Work up imagination to the state of vision and the thing is done!" But to what extent Blake believed in the objective reality of his own visions is a very difficult problem of psychology.

For nearly four years Blake lived in his cottage and worked for Hayley. But the end was bound to come. Kind and sympathetic as he was, Hayley had not the ghost of an idea of Blake's real genius, and considered him a mere engraver. We hardly know whether to smile or feel pitiful as we read his lines to—

"My gentle visionary Blake,
Whose thoughts are fanciful and kindly mild."

Gilchrist pictures the oddly assorted pair working together in Hayley's library, "both visionaries, but in how different a sense! the urbane amateur seeing nothing as it really was; the painter seeing only, so to speak, the unseen; the first with a mind full of literary conventions, swiftly writing without thought; the other, with a head just as full of originalities—right or wrong—patiently busying his hands at his irksome craft, while his spirit wandered through the invisible world!"

In fact, Hayley was an amiable squire with some literary tastes, mainly of a dilettante and sentimental order. Southey wrote of him, "Everything about that man is good except his poetry." His works, however, were certainly popular at the time. His chief poem, "The Triumphs of Temper," ran through twelve or more editions, and he was once offered the Laureateship, which he declined. Yet probably Byron's satire in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* is juster than most of the criticisms in that poem:—

“His style in youth or age is just the same,
For ever feeble and for ever tame.
Triumphant first see ‘Temper’s Triumphs’ shine;
At least I am sure they triumphed over mine.”

It cannot be wondered at, therefore, that Blake grew impatient of Hayley’s “genteel ignorance and polite disapprobation,” and felt that at any cost he must return to London. “The Visions were angry with me at Felpham,” as he said afterwards. Just before he left he was prosecuted on a ridiculous charge of sedition. Of this we have Blake’s own account, which has been lately corroborated by the discovery of the sworn information of his accuser, his own rebutting memorandum, and the shorthand notes of his counsel’s speech. It must be remembered that his views were strongly republican, and that he had even dared to wear the red cap of liberty openly in London during the French Revolution. Naturally he objected to the King’s soldiers, and when he found that his gardener had asked a soldier to help him in the garden, he politely requested the latter to leave. The soldier, who had been a serjeant, but had been degraded for drunkenness and was perhaps drunk at the time, refused to go,^m and the result was a scuffle, which ended in Blake forcibly running the man down the street to the village inn. In revenge the soldier and a comrade accused Blake of seditious language, asserting that he had roundly consigned to perdition the King, his army, and all his subjects. Gilchrist’s version asserts that in the heat of the altercation Blake had said, “Damn the King and you too !” but Blake himself says that “not one word relating to the King or Government was spoken either by him or me.” This he proved by the evidence of his gardener and other bystanders. The trial was at the Guildhall at

Chichester, but the soldiers' charges were so improbable that the poet was acquitted, amid the cheers of the bystanders. Hayley had acted his usual part of kind friend and sworn to his excellent character. Blake thought afterwards that the soldier had been sent to entrap him because of his known republican opinions, but this may be safely pronounced one of his wild ideas.

The direct route back to Arundel leads through Yapton, Ford, and Tortington. If any tourist should follow the ramble here suggested, it is probable that by now he will have had enough of sight-seeing, and not care for any more divergences. But the corner of Sussex which we have now reached is so remarkable for its collection of churches, mostly small, but of great interest to the antiquarian, that the church-lover may well employ an extra day in its exploration.

The outward appearance of Yapton Church, in spite of its fine Transition-Norman tower, suggests little but neglect and decay. The interior view, however, is striking, since the nave contains two fine arcades, coeval with the tower, and with an Early English chancel beyond them. The eight-sided font of black marble is either Norman or still earlier. Some distance to the West lies Barnham, where the old church has a Norman nave and an Early English chancel. The blocked arcade north of the nave indicates a vanished aisle, a little earlier in date than the chancel. Still further, in a north-west direction, is Eastergate Church, which has an unrestored Saxon chancel. On the north side is a small original window, on the south a good deal of herring-bone work in Roman brick. It is noticeable that of the churches which show Roman brick, all except Hardham lie in the flat plain

near Chichester. In the present ramble we have already, at Walberton, met with another of these churches. The rest comprise St. Olave's, in Chichester itself, and Rumboldswyke, Westhampnett, and Bosham in the immediate neighbourhood of the city. All point to the Saxon period, when the deserted Roman villas were the natural quarries of the surrounding district.

Retracing our steps to Yapton and continuing eastward we come to Ford, with another small but interesting church, mainly Norman and Transition-Norman, but with an inserted Decorated window at the east end. According to Mr. P. M. Johnston, this little church illustrates the architecture of seven periods—from Saxon to Caroline. One mile south of Ford lies the really beautiful church of Clymping. The body of the edifice is simple but effective Early English, a little over-restored. It contains a Decorated font, an old stone pulpit, and an Early English chest. The tower is very good Transition-Norman, with a rich doorway and flat buttresses with little lancet windows opened in them, a feature to be seen also at Old Shoreham Church. A mile south of Clymping, and close to the sea, are the slight remains of Atherington Chapel. The walls of the rectangular building are Early Norman, but the windows are Early Geometrical, and show pillars with beautiful capitals of natural foliage. The whole of the Bailiff's Court House, to which the chapel is attached, shows stone work of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in its walls. The bailiff was the agent of two abbeys at Sééz, in Normandy, who held land in Clymping parish, and the chapel served at once as a private chapel attached to his manor-house, and as a chapel-of-ease to Clymping Church.

We can now turn northward again for the last time, and retrace our steps past Ford Junction to Tortington, where there is a small church containing beautiful Norman work, including beak-heads on the capitals, a feature rarely found in interiors. About a mile north are the remains of Tortington Priory, consisting mainly of some Early English clustered pillars. A short distance further and we are again back in Arundel.

Our next ramble is south-east from Arundel to explore the plain lying between the Downs and the sea-coast from Littlehampton to Worthing. The strip of flat country which lies south of West Sussex narrows continually as we advance eastward, till it is less than half the breadth it was between Goodwood and Selsey. The Downs have a continuous south-easterly trend and the coast a north-easterly, so that beyond Shoreham the chalk at last reaches the sea. This flat belt is thickly covered with villages, which merit some description, but has no place of first-rate interest.

First, we cross the Arun and stroll down its eastern bank, with the widening channel of its estuary on our right. The lower part of this river has been long famous for its mullet, and the osprey, which is locally known as the "mullet-hawk," may occasionally be seen on the river, in pursuit of his favourite fish. There is only one village passed before we reach Littlehampton—Lymminster or Leominster. Here from Saxon times there was a small nunnery, to the influence of which must be traced the fineness of the church. No Saxon work, however, remains, with the doubtful exception of the plain chancel-arch with its double impost, which, however, may be Early Norman. Most of the church shows good Transition-Norman work,

to which style belong the fine row of pillars and the marble font. There are some Early English alterations and a graceful piscina.

Littlehampton is now reached, a watering-place with much the same advantages and disadvantages as Bognor. In one or two respects it is superior to its rival. Placed at the navigable mouth of the Arun, it has been a small port ever since in Norman times it was the seaport of the rape of Arundel. It was here, as we have already seen, that the Empress Matilda landed in 1139 before entering Arundel; but it has no subsequent connection with history. No buildings in the town show its age, and the church is quite modern. Between the houses and the sea there is an open, breezy common, and the corner of the esplanade by the lighthouse, between the river and the sea, is a pleasant spot. The surrounding district is sometimes called the garden of Sussex for its exceptional fertility, but it is perfectly flat.

Between Littlehampton and Worthing there are four villages, all built a little inland from the coast, and all presenting points of interest. Rustington Church has one of the most picturesque Transition-Norman towers in the county. Inside should be noticed the pillars without capitals, the curious Early English clerestory, the squint, the steps to the rood-loft, and two strange pieces of sculpture. East Preston Church has a low stone spire, of which there are only five in the whole of Sussex which are not modern, the spires being almost always covered with shingles, mostly wooden, but here and there of slate. Ferring Church has a remarkably good holy-water stoup. Goring has fine woods and is near the curious High-down Hill, a detached chalk down standing somewhat to the south of the main range. Though it is only

269 feet high, it is a most conspicuous object in the whole district we are traversing, and from some points of view assumes a fine conical shape. It is a favourite excursion from Worthing. At the top there is an ancient entrenchment, within which there has been found a perfect medley of objects of all dates, thus showing that it has been occupied by a succession of races, starting from the Celts of the Bronze Age, to which period belongs a bronze dagger that has been found here. But it is to be feared that the tourists from Worthing come rather to see the tomb of a miller, who, being somewhat of a crank, had himself buried on the top of the hill where his mill used to stand. Probably he would have been forgotten long ago but for the unwritten law of watering-places that "attractions" must be found to give an excuse for excursions.

Goring will also be long remembered as the death-place of Richard Jefferies, who, after first staying at Brighton and Crowborough, settled here at the end of his life, and on August 14, 1887, died after a lingering and painful illness, made more bitter by poverty and neglect. He was buried in Broadwater Church, near Worthing, which we shall reach later on in this ramble. In him our age lost prematurely the most successful interpreter of Nature that it has seen, who combined the keen insight of the poet with the patient and minute observation of the naturalist. He has left many fascinating descriptions of Sussex scenery, some of which I have quoted later on in my accounts of Ashdown Forest and Crowborough. But, as he is not fond of giving the names of the places about which he writes, many of his scenes will have to remain unrecognised.

The next village, West Tarring, is practically a suburb of Worthing and a very interesting one. Its



OLD HOUSES, WEST TARRING

large and spacious church has an Early English nave with clerestory and a Perpendicular chancel with tower and spire. It contains a beautiful piscina (Early English), a low Perpendicular screen, and old stalls with misereres. Just opposite are the remains of an archiepiscopal palace, dating from the time when West Tarring was a "peculiar" of the Archbishop of Canterbury. They are mostly Perpendicular, but the window-frames and some of the doors indicate an earlier structure (late thirteenth century). A little south is a famous fig-garden containing several old trees, some of which, tradition states, were planted by St. Richard of Chichester. One patriarch even bears a label claiming that it was planted by Becket. There is a well-known story that this garden and another at Sompting are visited in fig-time by the beccafico, which comes to no other part of England. I have heard that the truth of this has been denied. Not being an ornithologist I can offer no opinion; but there is a stuffed specimen shown at the gardens which I think it might be worth while for some expert to go and examine. For aught I know it may turn out to be a tom-tit. The village also contains old timber-built houses, one or two with good barge-boards.

A little north of West Tarring is the hamlet of Salvington, a timber-built cottage in which was the birthplace in 1584 of John Selden, the great jurist, and one of Sussex's most famous sons. Though he took a prominent part in the constitutional struggle of Charles I.'s reign, he is so rarely mentioned in ordinary histories that he is less generally known than many men of less genius. When he was ten years old he carved a Latin couplet, still legible, on the inside of the door:—

"Gratus, honeste, mihi ; non claudar ; inito scdeque.
Fur, abeas ; non sum facta soluta tibi.'

This couplet Johnson has translated :—

"Walk in and welcome ; honest friend, repose.
Thief, get thee gone ; to thee I'll not unclose."

Worthing, though the fourth largest town in Sussex, is essentially of the same type as Bognor and Littlehampton, famous for health-giving air and sunshine, and beloved by all who are satisfied with firm sands and seaside amusements, but with little charm in either its situation or its buildings. It has grown from a small village to its present size in about a century. Perhaps the most distinctive feature is the amount of ground in the neighbourhood which is given up to market-gardening and cultivation under glass, tomatoes being largely grown. As an excursion centre Worthing is distinctly to be recommended, several interesting places being easily reached—in particular Chanctonbury and Cissbury Rings, on the South Downs. About a mile to the north is Broadwater, the original parish from which Worthing has developed. The splendid cruciform church, near which Richard Jefferies lies buried, shows fine Transition-Norman work. The massive central tower is effective, though less impressive than its neighbour at New Shoreham. The piers on which it rests are connected by highly ornamented arches. On the west arch there are beak-heads, and on the east arch figures of grotesque birds and palm branches. The capitals of the west arch have had to be enclosed in strengthening buttresses. The chancel is also very pretty. It is somewhat later in style, showing a plain

vaulted roof (essentially Early English) and a string-course of zigzag and pellet ornament. The actual east end and the nave are later and of no interest. The Renaissance tombs to the eighth and ninth Lords de la Warr (1525 and 1554) are worth careful study. The circumstances which gave the latter nobleman a second tomb in Boxgrove Church have already been explained. There are also one or two brasses.

By continuing a little farther north on the road, then turning to the right and walking a mile and a half further, we shall reach a still more remarkable church—Sompting, which is famous for its Saxon tower. This is of a peculiar shape, a pyramidal cap being interrupted to form a gable on each side. Among the Saxon details, perhaps the most interesting are the capitals of the tower arch, which show curiously elaborate Romanesque patterns. The church is mainly Norman, but in the transepts there are some Transition details, especially to be noticed in the chapels at their east ends. In the north transept the chapel takes the form of a beautifully vaulted aisle, which has retained its original windows. All the other windows in the church have been altered to Perpendicular. Among many interesting features are two ancient sculptures, one of a bishop, another of our Lord holding an open book. These resemble in style the Saxon sculptures in the cathedral, but may be somewhat later in date. The number of Norman aumbries and piscinæ is also remarkable.

If we now return to the Broadwater road, continue on it more than half a mile further, and bear right at the Offington turn, we reach a road which leads westward nearly straight back to Arundel, passing between Highdown Hill and the Downs. North of this road lie Clapham, with an interesting old church,

mainly Early English, but with one arcade somewhat earlier than the rest, and Patching, with a simple Early English church. Presently the road has Angmering Park on the right and Angmering village on the left. In the centre of the latter is New Place, once the seat of the Palmer family, but now divided into cottages. Here were born the celebrated Palmer triplets, all of whom were knighted by Henry VIII.

Before regaining Arundel, the church-lover should make a *détour* north to the pretty village of Burpham, which is built on a Down slope overlooking the Arun valley. The cruciform church will repay careful inspection. The earliest parts are the Norman central arches which lead into the transepts. Next, in the nave, comes a fine Transition-Norman arcade of hard chalk. Still more beautiful is the Early English chancel with its recessed lancets and graceful vaulting. Later styles are illustrated by a plate-tracery window, some inserted Decorated and Perpendicular windows, and a good Perpendicular tower.

CHAPTER VI

ARUNDEL TO BRAMBER—CHARLES II. IN SUSSEX

Amberley, Parham, Storrington and the Downs

THE chief interest of this road lies in the fact that, according to the most probable explanation, this was the route traversed by Charles II. in his flight across Sussex after Worcester fight. Accordingly I purpose, after describing this route on the usual lines, to turn back again and try to trace out the details of Charles's memorable ride.

The road northwards from Arundel misses two picturesque little villages, North and South Stoke, which lie deep in the gorge of the Arun, and are so separated from each other and from the world in general by the winding curves of the river that access to them is difficult. They are, however, worth a visit, for all who can find time for the *détour*, and their churches contain some points of interest, such as the Early English sedilia in North Stoke and the Norman door in South Stoke. In or near the Arun, about this neighbourhood, an old British canoe has been found, a curious relic now carefully preserved in Lewes Museum.

For the first two miles after leaving Arundel the road skirts the park, and the preferable alternative is to ride or walk through it. At the cross-roads, in

about two miles, we turn right, and descend through Houghton to the river just about the point where it enters the gorge. Houghton Church is plain Early English, with a brass dated 1486. From the seven-arched bridge there is a beautiful view of the gorge and Arundel Park. Half a mile on the far side brings us to Amberley, resting just underneath the northern slope of the Downs, which, after a long absence, we have now regained.

The village of Amberley, perched on its low terrace-cliff beneath an angle of the Downs, and overlooking the lush water meadows, picturesquely called the Wild Brooks, through which the Arun winds before it enters its narrow gorge, will seem to the summer tourist a delightful spot. Indeed, the story runs that if you ask a villager in the summer where he lives, he answers, "Amberley; where *would* you live?"¹ But if the same question be asked in the winter, when the Wild Brooks are flooded to the foot of the castle walls and the Downs veiled in low-brooding, chilly mists, the answer is, "Amberley, God help us!" Perhaps the Bishops of Chichester, who have held possessions in Amberley from very early, possibly even pre-Conquest, times, when the see was still at Selsey, may have been of the same opinion, and considered it a desirable home for the summer only. At what period the episcopal residence was built and it became the regular thing for the Bishops to pass part of their time here is a matter of considerable uncertainty. It is well ascertained, however, that in the reign of Richard II. Bishop Reede obtained a licence to crenellate his mansion, and that from that time it has

¹ Mr. A. J. C. Hare's *Sussex*, where I first saw this story, contains several other quaint local sayings and proverbs. The present one is quoted from M. A. Lower.

been known as Amberley Castle, though strictly speaking it was only a castellated house. Formidable as its walls look, it has seen no fighting and has no connection with history. Its most striking external features at present are the long, massive wall on the north—which should be viewed from the Wild Brooks, below the low cliff on which the castle stands—and the main entrance to the south, a very solid gateway flanked by round towers, which contains a portcullis groove and is approached by a causeway over a moat, across which a drawbridge once was thrown. The dwelling inside the walls, picturesque amid its surroundings of trees and smooth turf, was built by Bishop Sherborne, the last Bishop who lived here. An old door leads eastwards through the outer walls to the church, which is very interesting. The nave with chancel arch is Norman, and the chancel, south aisle, and tower Early English. The two most striking features are the very beautiful Decorated south door and the hour-glass stand near the pulpit. There is a Norman font and a brass dated 1424.

Eastward from Amberley the road runs along the foot of the Downs. Immediately to the north there is a break in the Lower Greensand belt, due partly to the alluvial strath of the Arun and partly to the temporary broadening of the Gault, but the sand-hills soon recommence. In a little more than a mile we have on our left Parham, the seat of Lord Zouche. Here the most delightful continuation of the journey would be to turn into Parham Park and proceed straight through it to the far end near Storrington. Unfortunately the cyclist who has ridden over from Amberley will find that cyclists are not allowed in the park, though pedestrians are freely admitted. It is hard to see why some owners of parks, who obviously intend

to be public-spirited, should, as here and at Petworth, taboo the harmless necessary cyclist. They seem to apprehend invasion by wild tribes of scorchers, but the experience of Goodwood, Cowdray, and Arundel Parks would probably inform them that their fears are visionary. There used, indeed, to be a notice on Arundel park-gates that unless cyclists desisted from scorching in the park the privilege of entrance would be withdrawn. But the threat has not been executed, so that the evil must have diminished. At the present day it is fairly patent that the average cyclist is a respectable individual, and that the "all for speed" cad usually rides in a motor.

It would be difficult to praise Parham Park too highly. The sandy soil forms a succession of knolls, on which the fir-trees cluster thickly, with the deer grazing amid the bracken in the glades between. The best views are those which surround a beautiful, though small lake, or where the Downs stand up as a background to the thick-growing tree-clumps. At the northern end of the park the fir-woods are continuous, and in the centre is a heronry, described for us, of course, by our old friend Mr. A. E. Knox, whose adventures in exploring it were highly interesting. When cautiously approaching, he managed, by the unlucky snapping of a dry twig, to scare the adult part of the colony, who fled screaming. He then climbed a spruce fir to one of the nests, where he found a fully-fledged young bird, which did not object to be handled, but, when his head appeared, made a vicious dart at his eyes, which he avoided with difficulty by bobbing his head. The bird then scrambled out of the nest on to an adjoining bough, whence Mr. Knox was able, after some difficulty, to dislodge it, and so finally capture it. A little later he was fortunate

enough to see some of the young birds being fed. In one case a heron dropped a fish, which appeared to be above half a pound in weight, into the bottom of his nest, and at once proceeded skilfully to carve it with his beak and satisfy his voracious brood.

Still further north, and just beyond the bounds of Parham Park, is Wiggonholt Common, a small but delightful specimen of its class. The views from the picturesque central clump are very good. Wiggonholt House is large and rambling. The little church is close to it, and looks like a private chapel attached to the house. It is simple Perpendicular, with an earlier font.

Parham House is a handsome Elizabethan mansion, partly damaged by modern alterations and the incongruous water-tower. The inside is full of treasures, which were mostly collected by the last Lord Zouche. Among the most precious are the autograph copy of Byron's lines, "She walks in beauty," and the copy of Montaigne's Essays with the autograph of William Shakespeare. The great hall shows one of the finest collections of defensive armour extant. It also contains the arms of Queen Elizabeth, who dined here in 1591, on her way to Cowdray. In the characteristic Long Gallery there are shown steps leading to the Priest's Hole. Three of the portraits are specially worth mention—Mary Curzon, the governess of Charles I.'s children, by Vandyck; Constable Bourbon, by Titian; and the Earl of Leicester, by Zuccherò. In addition to these the house contains several most valuable collections of MS. books, writing implements, plate, old china, &c.

A little south of the house is the small Perpendicular church, which contains one of the three leaden fonts in Sussex. There is another curious font in the

private chapel at the house, which once belonged to St. Peter's Church, Oxford. It is wooden, Elizabethan in character, and shows figures of Adam and Eve.

About a mile beyond Parham Park the road passes through Storrington, a clean, well-built, and prosperous-looking village, surrounded by open commons, but with nothing to describe, the church having been largely modernised. Many will recall the name of this place as the site of a successful army-coaching establishment, still, I believe, flourishing. When it was first established it was doubtless a convenience, in controlling a somewhat erratic type of youth, that the railway was five miles distant in one direction and seven in another. Since the advent of bicycles and motor-cars this particular advantage must be smaller.

But the glory of Storrington is to be found in the Downs, which rise opposite the village into the prominent Kithurst Hill, the central point of that section of the South Downs which stretches from the Arun to the Adur, and one from which the special characteristics of this section may be best considered. Accordingly we will diverge southwards, into the pleasant lane which leads straight to the hill. On approaching the great slopes we may notice how much barer of trees they are than the Downs that lie west of the Arun. The ascent is up a very steep side, which has been cut into natural steps. When the top is reached, the view northwards is well worthy of attention. The richly diversified belt of the Lower Greensand is still stretching in front, so that the series of commons and parks is as characteristic as in the Midhurst country; indeed, at this point it is, if anything, more charming than ever, for the glorious Parham woods, which are conspicuous on the left, are as fine as any feature close to Midhurst. But the sand-belt is growing percep-



KITHURST HILL FROM STORRINGTON COMMON

tibly narrower, and is no longer bounded by a chain of hills on the north. The result is that there is now a more uninterrupted view northwards far into the Weald, and stretching away to the distant Leith Hill range. The Greensand belt runs along this section of the Downs right to the banks of the Adur, where it practically ceases to become an element in the scenery. Turning southward, the change from the western part of the Downs is very conspicuous. Instead of rich beech forests we have now bare rolling slopes, mainly covered with short turf, but with scattered patches of cultivation, the whole forming an upland chalk plateau of three or four miles in breadth. This is the most characteristic formation of the South Downs, and continues eastwards, without any decided change, as far as the end of the range in Beachy Head. From our feet the ground slopes gradually away until, at a distance of a mile and a half to the south, it rises again into the height of Harrow Hill, to the east of which, a little further off, is another hill, Black Patch.

Storrington may be regained by a slight *détour* which takes in Sullington, a village about half a mile south-east of it. Here an ancient church, mainly of rude Early English, lies under the shadow of two yew-trees. It is worth seeing, both for its pretty Decorated east window and for the defaced effigy of a knight whose name has perished. Above his tomb are now the following verses :—

“Tho’ knightly virtues here might claim
 The tribute of a deathless name,
 No record, such is fate’s decree,
 Transmits it to posterity.
 Then, reader, say, if this the doom,
 Does aught avail the sculptured tomb?
 To heaven, not earth, direct thy care;
 Thy deeds are all remembered there.”

The Steyning and Bramber road, after leaving Storrington, proceeds due eastward, the principal object in view being Chanctonbury Ring, the central point of the Downs, which grows clearer and clearer as we approach it. In four miles we reach the hamlet of Washington, where the church has a Perpendicular tower, with good sound-holes, but no other ancient feature. From here a road diverges south which runs to Worthing, first passing over a low *col* in the Downs, and then dropping into the pleasant valley in which lies the village of Findon. Here there are a prettily situated church of some interest (mainly Early English, but with some Norman portions) and training-stables, the horses in which find splendid turf for galloping between Kithurst and Harrow Hills.

The Bramber road now passes just north of Wiston and Chanctonbury, and then through Steyning to its destination. As, however, the flight of Charles II. along this road is still to be traced, these places may as well be described in the course of a ramble from Bramber.

Charles II., during his flight, was only in Sussex for one day and part of another, the tradition that he slept at Amberley Castle *en route* being quite unhistorical. Of his ride we have the detailed narrative which Colonel Gounter, of Racton, who "had the happiness," as he says, "to be instrumental in the business," dictated before his death. He had previously arranged with Captain Tattersal, whose ship was lying at Shoreham, to carry a fugitive to France, without revealing the fact that it was the King. On the night between October 13 and 14, 1651, Charles slept at Hambledon, in Hampshire, at the house of Colonel Gounter's sister. In the morning he started with Lord Wilmot and Colonel Gounter, and rode across Sussex

to Brighton (then the village of Brighthelmstone). The places passed were Stansted, Racton, Arundel, Houghton, Bramber, Beeding, and Brighthelmstone. Stansted is mentioned, not by Colonel Gounter, but in the independent narrative called *Boscobel*, where it is related that the Colonel's brother rode with them as far as Stansted, but was then dismissed, that the party might not be too conspicuous. Racton is directly in the way between Stansted and Arundel, and although there is no mention of the place in either narrative, yet the tradition that a halt was made at a timber-built cottage still existing is very likely true, especially as this was Colonel Gounter's own village. For the rest of the narrative the Colonel may be allowed to speak for himself. It will be noticed that he begins in the third person and presently changes his narrative to the first.

“The King slept well all night, and by break of day, the Colonel putting up two neats' tongues in his pockets, which he thought they might need by the way, they set out and began their journey. They were no sooner come to Arundel Hill, as they rode close by the castle, but the governor, Captain Morley, met them full butt, hunting. The Colonel, the better to avoid them, it being a steep hill they were to go down, presently alighted, and his company (as was agreed before) did as he did, and so happily they escaped them. The King, being told who it was, replied merrily, ‘I did not much like his starched mouchates.’

“So we came to Houghton, where on horseback we made a stop at an ale-house for some bread and drink; and there our neats' tongues stood us in very good stead and were heartily eaten. From thence being come to Bramber, we found the streets full of soldiers

on both sides of the houses, who, unluckily, and unknown to me, were come thither the night before to guard, but luckily (or rather by special Providence) were just then come from their guard at Bramber Bridge into the town for refreshment. We came upon them unawares, and were seen before we suspected anything. My Lord Wilmot was ready to turn back, when I stepped in and said, 'If we do, we are undone. Let us go on boldly and we shall not be suspected.' 'He saith well,' said the King. I went before, he followed, and so passed through without any hindrance.

"It was then between three and four of the clock in the afternoon; we went on, but had not gone far, when a new terror pursued us; the same soldiers riding after us as fast as they could. Whereupon the King gave me a hem. I slacked my pace till they could come up to me, and by that time the soldiers were come, who rudely passed by us (being in a narrow lane), so that we could hardly keep our saddles for them, but passed by without any further hurt, being 30 or 40 in number.

"When we were come to Beeding, a little village where I had provided a treatment for the King (one Mr. Bagshall's house), I was earnest that his Majesty should stay there awhile till I had viewed the coast; but my Lord Wilmot would by no means, for fear of those soldiers, but carried the King out of the road I knew not whither, so we parted. They where they thought safest, I to Brighthelmstone, being agreed they should send to me, when fixed anywhere and ready."

Obviously the last part of Charles's ride was over the Downs to Brighthelmstone, where Colonel Gounter rejoined him, but we have no further details which way he rode. Probably he ascended the Downs by Upper Horton farm, and rode by the track called

Gypsy Lane to Portslade. A tradition of his hiding at Portslade itself is apocryphal.

Colonel Gounter's narrative as related above lends no colour to a more romantic version of the flight, according to which Charles is represented as riding along the top of the Downs the whole way from the moment he set foot in the county till he reached Brighton. This is due to the imagination of a writer in the *Sussex Archæological Collections*,¹ but as it has sometimes been taken as the conclusion of a serious authority, it is worth a short examination. First, when the Colonel says that Charles went "out of the road," *i.e.*, on to the Downs, after Beeding, the natural inference is that he had kept on the road up till that moment. Secondly, the Colonel, in describing his meeting with Charles on the day before, is very precise in mentioning that they rode over the Hampshire Downs, even giving their names of Old Winchester Hill and Broadhalfpenny Down. Would he not have been as communicative about the Sussex Downs, if Charles had really ridden over them? Thirdly, and this is the strongest point, both Stansted and Racton lie well south of the main chain of the Downs, while to interpret Colonel Gounter's precise words "Arundel Hill, close by the castle," to mean "somewhere in Houghton Forest" (*i.e.*, three miles north of Arundel) is simply ludicrous. Lastly, there is nothing whatever to connect the ride with the Downs between the Arun and the Adur except the absolutely baseless tradition that Charles's horse was reshod at Lee Farm, under Harrow Hill. The natural

¹ Vol. 18. Mr. Allan Fea, who has investigated the question carefully in his *Flight of the King*, calls this article "drawn mainly from conjecture," and points out that two of the stories it uses are apocryphal.

conclusion is that in all probability Charles travelled along the high-road described in this chapter, through Arundel to Bramber.

A further question of some interest remains, to which a conjectural answer may be attempted, *i.e.*, Why was this route chosen? Obviously the main danger would be in crossing the Arun and the Adur, the bridges over which would very likely be guarded, those near the coast especially so, those further inland in a less degree. Now, from Colonel Gounter's statement that the soldiers had come to Bramber the night before without his knowledge, it may be inferred that he had made inquiries as to the bridges; so that he may well have discovered that one or both of the bridges on the obvious and direct road south of the Downs (*i.e.*, at Arundel and Shoreham) were guarded, and therefore have led Charles by the longer inland route by Houghton and Bramber bridges. Mr. Allan Fea suggests that the party intended to cross Arundel bridge, but were afraid to do so after meeting Captain Morley, and so turned northward to Houghton. It is difficult to ascertain from Colonel Gounter's rather confused English at this point which party was going up hill and which down; but if Mr. Fea's explanation is correct, that Charles's party was *ascending* the hill by the castle, they would already have turned away from the road leading to the bridge.

It may be as well to complete the tale of Charles's adventures at once, though the haste of the fugitive monarch has carried us ahead of the point which our more leisurely progress through the county has reached. All authorities are agreed that Colonel Gounter rejoined Lord Wilmot and the King at the George Inn at BRIGHTHELMSTONE, where they passed

the night. Here two alarming incidents happened. One was that the landlord, by name Smith, suddenly recognised Charles. He proved loyal, however, and contented himself with kissing the King's hand. The other was the behaviour of Captain Tattersal, who, if Charles's own account is true, also recognised him. Colonel Gounter, however, does not say this, but he states that Tattersal became uneasy and insisted on higher terms and stronger guarantees, to his own vexation and indignation. All, however, was presently satisfactorily arranged, and at two o'clock in the morning "horses were led by the back way to the beach." There is some difficulty as to where exactly the ship was moored. Tradition, corroborated by Charles's own narrative, says at Shoreham, but Clarendon states it was at Brighton. Colonel Gounter says no further word about Shoreham, but from a speech of Tattersal which he quotes, that "he had brought his vessel into creek, and the tide had forsaken it," it is clear that the ship must have been somewhere in Shoreham Harbour. Probably, however, it lay in the eastern branch of it,¹ by Southwick or Portslade, so as to be easily reached from Brighton, and thus was at some distance from Shoreham itself. Charles embarked safely and was soon landed at Fécamp. Colonel Gounter ends his narrative by saying that "I was not gone out of the town (Brighthelmstone) two hours, but soldiers came thither to search for a tall black man, six feet two inches high." But History had already decided that the Merry Monarch should, for better or for worse, play his part among English kings.²

¹ For the peculiar conformation of Shoreham Harbour, see Chapter VIII. A glance at the map would be desirable.

² See note on p. 323.

CHAPTER VII

BRAMBER AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

Bramber—Steyning, Wiston, and Chanctonbury Ring—Northwards to West Chiltington, West Grinstead, and Knepp—Eastwards to Poynings and Wolstonbury

ONE of the greatest pleasures experienced by the Rambler in Sussex is to evolve the intense historic interest which sometimes lies hid in an apparently insignificant village. We have already seen how different Bosham and Bignor appear when looked at with the eye of the mind. Here again is a little village with about 150 inhabitants, neither more nor less, and in which all that there is to be seen will hardly detain the visitor ten minutes. The little Adur on its way to the sea forms a gap in the Downs about half a mile broad. Looking westward from the bridge by which King Charles II. crossed, we have before us the one village street, with its quaint, picturesque cottages, leading up to a detached conical hill, now thickly covered with trees. Half-way up the hill the tiny church is hidden in the thick foliage, while on the summit a solitary ruined tower rears itself, one of those survivals of vanished greatness which seem vastly more pathetic and suggestive than elaborate ruins such as Cowdray or Hurstmonceux. A little further still the Downs rise up to complete the picture.

Probably the many trippers who come here from Worthing and Brighton consider it a somewhat dull place. The ruins are very scanty, and the amusements provided in the castle area as a substitute are scarcely as varied as those at the Devil's Dyke. Perhaps, however, it would be unfair to assert that history is wholly uncared for. There is a fairly well-informed *History of Bramber Castle* on sale. Also when I was looking at St. Mary's House, the fine timber-built one next to the bridge, a native volunteered the information that it was the last house Charles II. slept in before his escape. Inaccurate knowledge at least shows interest, and is better than no knowledge at all.

The authentic history of Bramber begins with the building of the Norman castle after the Conquest. It seems probable that there was already a Saxon castle here, but no details of it have been preserved. Lower, the historian of Sussex, believes that the place can be traced back to Roman times. It is stated that the foundations of a Roman bridge have been discovered here, but Lower's theory really rests on the assumption that it was the site of the Roman fortress, *Portus Adurni*. This mysterious place has been located by other antiquarians at Shoreham and by yet others at Aldrington, near Brighton, close to the old river-mouth. It has seemed to all authorities hitherto that it was axiomatic to assume that the fortress was on the banks of the Adur, yet the late Dr. F. Haverfield has shown that this may be illusory. His argument is a warning against being misled by similarity of names. The name Adur, he states, was first given to the stream in Drayton's *Polyolbion*, in the well-known lines—

“And Adur, coming down to Shoreham, softly said,
The Downs did very ill, poor woods so to debase.”

On this passage Selden has a note explaining that Drayton had himself stood godfather to the river and christened it Adur, because Camden in his *Britannia* (1607) had conjecturally placed the site of *Portus Adurni* near the river-mouth at Aldrington. Accordingly the whole chain of reasoning connecting the Roman fortress with the river may be a web spun out of nothing. Wherever the site of the *Portus Adurni* may be, it is not to be found in Sussex. (See also p. 324.)

After the Conquest William I. gave the rape of Bramber, extending northwards to Horsham and southwards to the harbour of Shoreham, to William de Braose. The Braose family continued powerful in Sussex for many centuries, and traces of their influence are found in every corner of the rape. They possessed another castle at Knepp, which has met with almost the same utter destruction as their stronghold at Bramber. Nearly all the Lords of Bramber seem to have been named William, a fact which has caused much confusion, and makes it difficult to trace their history. There is only one of the family, however, whose adventures merit any description—the William de Braose who quarrelled with King John. It is very difficult to ascertain the facts of this quarrel, one of the principal authorities being a detailed account by John himself, which, of course, must be received with great suspicion. John's proceedings were usually so outrageous that it is natural to sympathise with his enemies, but it is difficult to feel much pity for William de Braose. Though he was a great lord, with large estates in Wales and Ireland as well as in Sussex, he became involved in a pitiful wrangle with the King over the amount of his feudal dues. Then he fell under suspicion of treason, and John sent to ask for

hostages, which Lady de Braose, who seems to have had the courage and determination which her husband lacked, induced him to refuse. Being thus committed to resistance, he made a feeble attempt at rebellion, and then fled to Ireland with his family. He now offered to compromise by paying a fine, but John would not agree until he had got Lady de Braose into his power, whom he rightly regarded as the cause of her husband's contumacy. After she had been brought back to England as prisoner, John accepted de Braose's offer of 40,000 marks. But, instead of paying, the mean and cowardly baron escaped from Shoreham to France in the disguise of a beggar, leaving his wife in John's power. The terrible end of the story is the statement that Lady de Braose, with her eldest son and two grandchildren, were starved to death in Windsor Castle by John's orders. The younger son Reginald regained the family estates a few years later.

The last male of the de Braose family died in 1315, after which the castle passed by marriage with the heiress, first to the Mowbrays and afterwards to the Howards, now of Arundel, who are still the owners of it.

The title, Duke of Norfolk, first belonged to the Mowbray family, having been originally granted to Thomas Mowbray, the famous Lord Appellant and opponent of Bolingbroke, who was exiled in 1398, and died at Venice, apparently in the next year—

. . . "and there at Venice gave
His body to that pleasant country's earth,
And his pure soul unto his captain Christ,
Under whose colours he had fought so long."

After his death, the title was held by four of his

descendants, the estate then passing by marriage to Sir Robert Howard, on whose son John the title of Duke of Norfolk was also conferred. He was the "Jockey of Norfolk" who shared the fate of his master, Richard III., on Bosworth field in 1485. As his son was a minor, the estate was for a time at the disposal of the Crown. During this period it was mostly tenanted by a Lord de Hurst, about whose wife Maud a tragic legend is recounted. It is, however, little more than a sordid story of vulgar passion and brutal revenge. After this the Howards held the estate for nearly a century, until Arundel fell to them in 1580, to which they migrated.

The castle was reduced to its present fragmentary condition in the Great Civil War (1643). The singular adventures of Charles II., when passing Bramber on the last day of his flight from England, were told in the last chapter.

In the eighteenth century Bramber became remarkable among rotten boroughs. It elected two members, the electors being the inhabitants of thirty-six houses on ancient foundations. Most of these belonged to one or the other of two rival interests, and the fiercest election fights were fought on a small scale, often involving such details as bribery, election petitions, and falsification of returns. Nearly every election seems to have ended in a wrangle, which had usually to be settled by Parliament. At last, after the contest of 1768, in which one elector is said to have refused a thousand pounds for his vote,¹ the rivals compromised, and agreed in the future to nominate one member each. The new state of things, in which the members and the constituency had no knowledge of each other, is illustrated by an anecdote of William

¹ See *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, vol. 16.

Wilberforce, who travelled through the village in 1819, and asked the postboy to inquire its name. On receiving the information, he repeated thoughtfully, "Bramber? Bramber?" as much as to say, "Surely I've heard that name before!" and then he burst out, "Why, that's the place I'm member for!" In 1832 Bramber had the distinction of being classed with Old Sarum, Gatton, and two others as the five worst boroughs in the kingdom.

The "White Lion," in the court-room of which the elections took place, is now the Castle Hotel. Of the castle there remains but one fragmentary barbican tower, showing a solitary Norman window, the site of the keep, and a few shapeless fragments of the walls. Of the cruciform Norman church nothing now remains but the arches of the central tower, which have been transformed into a small chancel. Most of the rest was destroyed by the Puritan soldiers.

Leaving Bramber by the western road, we ascend a slight hill, and then descend to Steyning, one mile distant. Here we have another of the quaint, old-world little towns, of which there are so many in Sussex, and which have the air of having gone to sleep somewhere in the Middle Ages. There are several ancient houses, some timber-built, others showing mullioned windows and projecting upper storeys, and a curious old bell-tower in the centre of the main street. Beyond all rises the tree-crowned height of Chanctonbury, whither we are presently bound. The railway seems quite irrelevant in so mediæval-looking a place, and discreetly keeps well to the east of the houses. Of the foundation of the church by St. Cuthman an elaborate legend is told, the oddity of which is quite in keeping with the general atmosphere.

The following version is abridged from Mr. Baring-

Gould's *Lives of the Saints*. One day, when Cuthman was feeding his father's sheep, he was hungry, and as there was no one else to guard his flock when he went to dinner, he drew a circle round them with his staff, and said, "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I command you sheep not to transgress the bounds I have drawn." Wonderful to relate, the sheep obeyed his command. After the death of his father Cuthman was forced to go forth into the world to seek work, taking with him his aged mother in a sort of wooden barrow drawn by a rope. Once when the rope broke he repaired it with a bough from an elder-tree, for which he was jeered at by some haymakers in a neighbouring field. Suddenly a pelting storm of rain descended and spoilt all the hay. At Steyning the rope broke again, and Cuthman understood that this was to be the place of his rest. First he built a hut and laid his mother in it; then he set about building his church single-handed. The people round about, seeing that he was a holy man, supported him and his mother, and gave him two oxen to carry stones. One day these oxen were seized by two young men, on which Cuthman compelled them to draw his cart instead of the oxen. When the church was nearly finished, he was troubled to find one of his wooden pillars was bent, but was taught how to straighten it by a stranger of a grave and beautiful aspect, who, when asked his name, answered, "I am Jesus, to whom thou buildest this house," and so vanished.

Of St. Cuthman's Church, which, of course, was Saxon, not a trace remains. The site was given by Edward the Confessor to the monks of Fécamp, who built here an early Norman church, of which two or three arches remain. But the glory of the present building is the rich late Norman work seen in the

piers, arches, and clerestory of the nave. Though most of the rest of the church has been badly treated, the beauty of these features lifts it to a high place among Sussex churches.

St. Cuthman also gave his name to the harbour, which existed here when the navigable estuary of the Adur used to stretch northwards beyond Bramber, and which was the main cause of the importance of the place in Saxon times. Now that the harbour has retreated, Steyning is little more than a quiet village, and it is strange to recall that the Saxon king Æthelwulf was buried here, that here was a Saxon mint, and that, in later times, it was, like Bramber, a borough returning two members, and only disfranchised in 1832.

A beautiful walk of a mile and a half, close under the shadow of the Downs, brings us to Wiston, yet another of the places where Sussex touches the general history of England. For many centuries after the Conquest it belonged to a junior branch of the great family of the de Braoses, until at last Sir John de Braose died in 1426, and left no son to succeed him. In the chapel may be seen Sir John's tomb, covered all over with the words *Jesu, Mercy*, and near it the figure of a child, which is thought to be the tomb of his son, who, dying before him, left him childless. The estate now passed to Sir John's sister, who had married into the famous Shirley family. She was at the time a widow, her husband, Sir Hugh Shirley, having been killed at Shrewsbury in 1403. The story is that the rebel leaders had determined, if possible, to kill King Henry IV. in the battle. Consequently Douglas slew in succession three knights who, because they belonged to the King's household, wore the King's armour, and were mistaken by him for the King. It

will be remembered that Shakespeare makes Prince Henry say to Douglas—

“Hold up thy head, vile Scot, or thou art like
Never to hold it up again! the spirits
Of Shirley, Stafford, Blunt are in my arms.”

The first Shirley to reside at Wiston was Sir Hugh's great-grandson, Sir Ralph Shirley, after whom the Shirleys held the estate for another hundred years. The last of the family were the three “Shirley brothers,” whose strange adventures were thought at the time so extraordinary that they furnished material for a contemporary play.

Anthony, the second brother, was the most remarkable. After fighting in the Netherlands, and filibustering on the West Coast of Africa and among the West Indies, he turned his attention to Asia, and went, in 1599, on a mission to Persia, apparently self-imposed, though he asserted that his patron Essex had sanctioned it. Here he met with considerable success, since the Shah made him a “Mirza,” or Prince, and sent him as ambassador to the courts of Europe, mainly to concert united action against the Turks. He was not allowed to return to England, where his pretensions were treated alternately with ridicule and with suspicion, but in some European courts he was received more favourably. He actually, in 1609, got appointed by the King of Spain admiral of an expedition intended to act against the Turks; but its complete failure finally discredited him, and his last years were passed in distress and poverty. The younger brother, Robert, had accompanied him to Persia, and stayed there some years, marrying a Circassian wife, who was also a Christian. In 1608 he also returned to Europe as am-

bassador, with his wife, and wearing Persian dress. As a diplomatist he seems to have had more success than his brother, but little practical result came from it. After visiting several European courts he was allowed, in 1611, to land in England, and even accorded an interview with James I., a favour again granted to him in 1624. He continued in the Shah's service up to within a few weeks of his death, in 1628. A picture of himself and his wife, which was painted by Vandyke at Rome, now hangs in the Petworth gallery. The elder brother, Thomas, who had seen service in the Netherlands and Ireland, was presently induced by the growing poverty of the family to throw up the army and try his hand at privateering. In this occupation he was unfortunate enough to fall into the hands of the Turks, and to remain in prison over two years. As the result of his efforts he was forced to sell Wiston, which ultimately passed into the hands of its present owners—the Gorings.

The chapel attached to the house used to contain an interesting series of Shirley memorials. But years of neglect, followed by a "restoration" of the worst type, have obliterated most of these and confused the few that remain. The best monument, that of Sir Richard Shirley (d. 1540), which was perfect before the restoration, has been almost completely destroyed, but the slab still remains, on which Sir Richard is depicted standing between his two wives. The house is a grand Elizabethan mansion, but has not retained its original form, since it was altered in the last century by Blore, the architect. The situation is perfectly charming, Chanctonbury Ring rising directly and steeply at the back, while in front there stretches a beautifully wooded deer-park, the last to be mentioned of those which owe their beauty to the Lower Greensand formation.

Chanctonbury Ring, both from its central position and fascinating curve, is the most striking point on the chain of the Downs, and is regarded by Sussex men with something of the love and reverence which Salopians feel for the Wrekin. Its crest of dark beeches makes it a conspicuous landmark far and wide, for which the Rambler in Sussex soon learns to look out, and which can be plainly discerned from as far north as Leith Hill. The hill is the fifth highest summit on the Downs, not the third, as is often stated, and the topmost point (783 feet) is somewhat above the Ring, which is placed just where it is most effective, on the very edge of the steep descent. The actual Ring is one of the ancient entrenchments which are so common on the Downs. It may at once be said of all of them that the popular notion, so decidedly supported by the Ordnance map, that they are Roman camps is no longer believed in by antiquarians. Roman coins have, indeed, been found both here and in several others, but this only proves Roman occupation, not that the "camps" were originally constructed by the Romans. In fact, they had been in existence long before the Romans arrived, and their origin is due, perhaps, to the Celts, certainly to an age which most will be content to describe as prehistoric. There is an excellent article on the subject in the *Victoria History of Sussex*, with plans of most of the earthworks. The glorious view takes in most of the Weald, reaching northward to Box Hill on the North Downs and to Leith Hill. The visitor may possibly be astonished to see the Worthing coach approach, which is driven by a circuitous route right to the top.

Many Sussex bards have attempted to sing the praises of Chanctonbury, but, instead of quoting them, I would rather refer to R. D. Blackmore's *Alice Lorraine*,

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a work with much of the charm of *Lorna Doone*, and which has thrown an air of romance over the whole neighbourhood. The imaginary mansion of the Lorraines is set in acombe of the Downs under the Ring, and looking northward over the Weald. Blackmore is careful to show that he does not mean Wiston; and he describes an ancestor of the Lorraines as riding forth with one of the Wiston de Braoses. Within the Ring itself he places the grave of an astrologer, who, in his later years, was fond of pacing the hill and gazing northwards from it, perhaps a somewhat incongruous addition to a Sussex landscape. More racy of the soil is the ghost story of the Saxon warrior, with long white beard, who had been slain at Hastings, and roamed the hillside in a vain search for the spot where he had hidden his treasure. According to the story, this was a crock of ancient coins, which was actually discovered on Chancton Farm in 1866. It consisted of silver pennies struck in various mints. Another prominent feature in Blackmore's story is the Woe-burn—a dark, rapid stream supposed to burst from Chanctonbury at long intervals of time and to bode evil to the Lorraine family. No such stream is found in the neighbourhood, but intermittent streams are fairly common in most chalk districts. At Lewes there is the Winterbourne, which regularly disappears in the summer. Also near Chichester are the Lavants, which occasionally burst forth in full volume and cause serious floods. The tradition that the Woe-burn portended disaster seems to come from a similar tale about the Merstham bourne in the North Downs. The real explanation in the latter case is said to be that when the floods dried up they often left a pestilence-breeding marsh behind them.

About two and a half miles south is Cissbury Ring,

which, though neither so striking a landmark nor so fine a viewpoint as Chanctonbury, is even more interesting historically. The name suggests Cissa, the younger son of the Saxon chief Ælla, but only illustrates the Saxon habit of giving their names to the work of other people. The Ring is the largest and finest earthwork in the county. In the Neolithic Age it was constructed as a camp of refuge, whither the inhabitants could drive their flocks and herds when the alarm of an enemy's approach was given. Inside there was an ancient flint manufactory—the Sheffield of the Neolithic Age, as it has been called. The pits from which the flint was quarried are plainly traceable—at least to the antiquarian—and even the discarded halves of flint tools, which the makers had broken in attempting to shape. It is seldom that archæology has so wonderful a tale to tell as this.

The road which leads northward from Steyning, though it will be found pleasant enough to cycle on, takes us into a country of much less interest than that which immediately surrounds the Downs. The Lower Greensand belt is here rapidly narrowing, and we soon cross it and reach the Wealden clay, which forms flattish or gently undulating country—not, indeed, destitute of charm, but much inferior to the chalk and sandstone districts. Before, however, we take this road we may first describe a short ramble, which just keeps on the edge of the Greensand, and leads us back in a north-westerly direction to Pulborough, by way of what may be called the upper road through West Chiltington. The country is pretty and well-wooded, and some pleasant villages are passed, none perhaps of very great interest, but as the way from one village to another is somewhat circuitous, it is not to be re-

commended to a cyclist in a hurry as an alternative to the high-road through Storrington.

Before starting it would be well to examine the route on a map. We leave the Storrington road at the turn to Buncton Chapel, which, though small, contains some good Norman work, and is worth stopping to examine. The first village, Ashington, has a restored Perpendicular church, but its only interest is a large ruined stoup. Warminghurst Church is only noticeable for the strange brass to Edward Shelley, his wife and nine children (1554). Thakeham, the next village, is of more interest. The church is Early English, with Perpendicular tower and font, and has some tombs and brasses worth noticing; also two trefoil-headed piscinæ. The road from here to West Chiltington is very winding, but the village itself is well worth a visit. Most of the church is good Transition-Norman work, which has fortunately been left unspoiled. There is a fine Norman door, two small round-headed windows, and pillars in the nave whose massiveness is remarkable, considering the comparative smallness of the church. There are also a stoup, and a huge tunnel-like squint piercing one of the massive piers. Nearly the whole church is covered with ancient wall-painting, but little that is definite is traceable. Not the least remarkable feature is the following epitaph, which may be commended to those writers of fiction who like a basis of fact for their sensational narratives:—

“In memory of Anne, late wife of James Croker, A.M., Rector of Sullington, and daughter of Thomas Osborne Esq., of Newtimber in Sussex by a lawful wife. She died Aug. 14, 1744, aged 38.

There the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.

Now perjury and forgery can hurt no longer.”

Pulborough is quite easily reached from here by way of Nutbourne Common.

We now return to Steyning, and leaving it by the north road, reach in four miles Ashurst, where there is an Early English church of singular shape with a late Transition-Norman tower, built only a few years before the nave arcade (c. 1200). We next cross the railway at Partridge Green, and recrossing it in another mile, reach West Grinstead. Here is a lovely deer-park, filled with fine trees and bracken, and commanding a distant view of Chanctonbury Ring. It was here that John Caryl, the friend of Pope and Gay, had a second home besides that at Ladyholt (p. 50), and both poets have been his guests here as well. Macaulay tells us that he was "the author of two successful plays, a tragedy in rhyme which had been made popular by the action and recitation of Betterton, and a comedy which owes all its value to the scenes borrowed from Molière. These pieces have long been forgotten, but what Caryl could not do for himself has been done for him by a more powerful genius. Half a line in the *Rape of the Lock* has made his name immortal."¹ The half-line admits that the subject of the poem was suggested by him: "This verse to Caryl, Muse, is due," and the poet is said to have written it here, under an oak in the park still called Pope's Oak.

The interesting church is hidden in a little valley south of the park. Its architecture is far more complicated than that of the usual Sussex church. The best parts are the Transition arches of the tower, and the Early English arches of the nave.

¹ In this passage Macaulay confuses Pope's friend with his uncle of the same name, who died in banishment in 1711, before Pope's poem was published.

Besides the unusual shape of the shingled spire, it contains some curiosities, especially a wall-painting of St. Christopher, and a lever, concealed behind a sliding panel in the chancel roof, of which the object is uncertain. It may have been to balance a canopy, or perhaps to swing a censer, before the Host.

Half a mile westward is a fragment of Knepp Castle, formerly belonging to the powerful de Braoses of Bramber. Nothing remains except a part of the keep wall, which stands on a mound in the middle of a field, with a moat traceable all round it. It supplies even a better sermon than Bramber Castle on the transitoriness of human greatness. The shape of the mound on which it stands is now considered to show that it was artificial, and thrown up before the castle was built, as a defence to the upper valley of the Adur. Compare the case of Park Mount (Chapter III.). The public path which runs just north of the old castle skirts the south of Knepp pond, the largest piece of fresh water in South-Eastern England. The modern Knepp Castle, in the adjoining park, was destroyed by fire in 1903, when several pictures by Holbein perished. A mile further west is Shipley Church, a beautiful edifice almost entirely Early Norman, but looking a little too spick and span after its restoration. It contains a remarkable Jacobean tomb to Sir T. Caryl and an ancient gilt reliquary.

If we now turn northwards we soon strike a road, which lies almost directly east and west. Following this eastward past West Grinstead station we reach Cowfold, where the church contains a very remarkable and beautiful brass, ten feet long, to Thomas Nelond, Prior of Lewes, d. 1433. The font and screen are

Perpendicular. Turning south, we pass in a mile and a half the new monastery of St. Hugh's, which was built by the Carthusian monks when expelled from France in 1877. The buildings are interesting to visit, and the tall white spire is a landmark all round the neighbourhood. Still further south we pass Shermanbury, where both church and Elizabethan house have been rebuilt, but the former shows a few old features. At Ewhurst an old fourteenth century gateway stands as a solitary relic of an ancient mansion. Still proceeding southward, we reach a little town of more importance, Henfield. It is built on a low sandy ridge, which on the west slopes to the Adur. The position is favourable for an extended view of the Downs, reaching from Chanctonbury by the Devil's Dyke to Wolstonbury. When, however, I last visited the town, the finest view-point, at the windmill, was barred to visitors. Apart from this splendid view there is little in the place to invite attention. The church is largely modernised, but contains Early English columns, a Perpendicular tower, and two good brasses. The road which leads back to Bramber in about four miles is of little interest, apart from the fine view of the Downs which is seen in front the whole way.

Immediately east of Bramber lies the third and longest connected stretch of the Downs, reaching to the banks of the Ouse at Lewes. Our next ramble is to be along the foot of the Downs as far as the main Brighton railway, which may be considered the dividing line between East and West Sussex. A still more pleasant walk would be to climb the Downs at once, and ramble along their tops to the Devil's Dyke, from which Brighton may be reached by road or rail.

But in this case we should miss the pleasant villages which nestle under the great northern wall. The first of these, Upper Beeding, is reached before we leave the Adur valley. It is a very small place. The vicarage marks the site of the ancient Priory of Sele, which has entirely disappeared. The church is mainly interesting for a pretty double window with round arches and well-cut Early English mouldings and shafts. The date must be about 1200, and the character of the work recalls that in the Cathedral, Boxgrove, and West Wittering. This window and a door close to it once belonged to the Priory church, and were set in their present position at the Dissolution. The connection of the village with the flight of Charles II. has already been indicated. The next village passed is Edburton, four miles east of Bramber, the situation of which is charming. The old church, mainly Early English, contains a pulpit and altar-rails presented by Laud in 1633, and one of the three lead fonts in Sussex, the other two being at Parham and Pyecombe. This church shows how the intentions of liberal-minded vicars, who wish to keep their churches open, can be defeated by the carelessness and irreverence of tourists. On my last visit but one to the church I noticed with amusement that, though the main door was locked, there was on it a notice *in French* recommending the visitor to try the north-east door. But on my last visit there was a notice stating that the vicar had been forced to shut the church, and the key could be had at the vicarage. The vicar is clearly a bit of a humorist, for he had written on an old chest an inscription to this effect (I quote from memory):—"Advice to burglars and others. This chest only contains some old papers, and is not worth while breaking open." This reminds me of a sarcastic notice in Great Yar-

mouth parish church : " If you want to write your insignificant name, do not write it on the church wall ; try the sand."

After passing Fulking, where there is a drinking-fountain in honour of John Ruskin, we reach beautiful Poynings, lying directly under the Devil's Dyke. Here there is an imposing cruciform church built in the Early Perpendicular style with money left by the third Baron de Poynings, who died 1368. Considering its date, and comparing the almost contemporary churches of Alfriston and Etchingham, it is remarkable how few traces of the Decorated style linger about it. It contains handsome sedilia and piscina, also what is said to be an old thurible, now used as an alms-box.

The Devil's Dyke may now be ascended by means of the " High Grade Railway," which seams the down-turf with two ugly vertical lines, and will prepare the visitor for the sight at the top. Here, close to one of the ancient camps which were built by prehistoric Celts and used by Romans and Saxons, is the one spot on the Downs on which the Vandals have laid hands. The branch railway from Brighton brings a constant succession of tourists, who have to be amused by a sort of perpetual fair which is kept up on the top. And yet perhaps it is well not to grumble too much at this, for hundreds who would otherwise never climb the Downs at all are shown the glorious view far over the Weald, which surely some of them must appreciate. To many, indeed, Nature seems to have no appeal. I have seen visitors to Borrowdale whose one thought has been to climb the ladder up the Bowder Stone. Yet I remember with pleasure that one day when I was gazing into a sea of mist from the top of Snowdon, the surging wreaths suddenly parted and revealed an exquisite fairy glimpse of the valley some

three thousand feet below. On this a tourist standing beside me, who had just come up with a party from Llanberis, gave a long "Oh!" of admiration, and added, "I must get my pals to see that." But before the pals could be induced to intermit their "liquoring up," the clouds had closed again and the vision was gone.

But I am keeping the name "Devil's Dyke" too long unexplained. The Dyke is one of the long narrow grassy combes which are common enough on the Downs. This, however, is one of the largest, which starts from close to the top in an easterly direction, making a half-turn to the north some way down. It is now largely spoilt by a so-called "aerial railway," which runs across its upper part. Of course it was the work of the devil, his object being to let the sea in upon the Weald and drown all the churches. It is an interesting fact that Sussex folk-lore, apparently remembering the proverbial consequences of talking about the gentleman in question, generally refers to him euphemistically as the "Poor Man"—*e.g.*, the camp at the top of the hill, also attributed to diabolic agency, is sometimes called "The Poor Man's Wall." The terrific noise caused by this superhuman work made the night hideous, until at last an old woman was wakened by it, and peered cautiously out of her cottage door, holding a lighted candle behind a sieve. The devil believed that the sun had risen, and hastily fled with his task half done. In this quaint legend we see, not only that the powers of evil can only work by night, but also that they are easily gullible. The latter characteristic appears in another Sussex legend, which is localised at Crowborough, but may as well be told here. A respectable member of society once incautiously tried a spell for raising the devil, and, to

his utter consternation, succeeded. He at once called in his son to help, who, knowing that, if one raises an evil spirit, the only safe course is to give him work to do, produced a bag of clover seeds, and scattering them about the floor, told the devil to show his satanic cleverness by picking them all up. The fiend started to perform the task, but, before he had finished, father and son completed the incantations necessary to make him descend again to his usual abode.

It is easy for the visitor to the Devil's Dyke to avoid the excursionists by walking a little way either west or east, whence the character of this portion of the Downs can be readily understood. Its aspect differs little from that of the Storrington Downs, save that, if anything, it is even more bare of trees. Looking westward, the beautiful "waterfall" effect of the Downs is very marked. The hill first curves over at the top and then suddenly descends steeply, slope beyond slope falling at exactly the same angle. The southern slopes are quite bare, but are getting rather spoilt by the long arms which Brighton is beginning to stretch out northwards towards the Downs. The view over the Weald takes us on clear days right to the North Downs, Leith Hill now standing in advance well to the left.

The Dyke railway would take us rapidly to Brighton, but for the present we will turn down the hill again to Poynings, and resume our eastward road. Almost immediately the road turns off to the north, following the slope of the Downs, which at this point only have a distinct north-eastern trend. Newtimber, the next village, has an Elizabethan manor-house and a tiny church hidden away among trees, but of no great interest. Immediately on passing it we reach the great London and Brighton road, close to where it

skirts Wolstonbury Beacon. At this point the Downs again change their direction, resuming their usual south-eastern course. Wolstonbury Beacon is therefore in a remarkable position at an angle of the range. It also has a large ancient earthwork of striking outline on the top. These two causes combine to lend it a prominence which its actual height (677 feet) would hardly give it. A little north of it is the fine Elizabethan mansion of Danny, built of warm red brick, and one of the most pleasing old houses in Sussex. It is set in a small park, but with some fine trees. Further north is Hurstpierpoint, a largish place of little interest. In the church is a brass to the martyr-bishop, Hannington, who was a curate here. St. John's College is one of the Woodard schools,[†] and has good buildings, including an impressive chapel, with a flight of steps to the altar. A little further is Hassock's Gate Station on the London and Brighton Railway.

A return to Bramber might be made through Albourne and Henfield. Albourne has a church retaining a Norman chancel-arch, and a manor-house with memories of Archbishop Juxon, who was a Sussex man and a native of Chichester.

[†] See next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

BRAMBER TO SHOREHAM AND BRIGHTON

The Lower Adur valley—Shoreham and its harbour

THE beauty of the Adur valley diminishes rapidly in descending from Bramber to Shoreham. The Downs get lower and tamer and the river becomes an estuary, which is a stretch of mud for eight hours out of the twelve. The direct way to Shoreham is by the road on the left bank, but the right bank is the best to choose, although its roads are little more than cart-tracks, for it passes two of the quaintest little churches in the county, Botolphs and Coombes. Neither can be called a handsome building, for both are plain and rude, but they are very old and absolutely unrestored. This, indeed, is hardly surprising, for it is difficult to see how the necessary funds could be raised from the few houses from which their congregations are drawn. Both have round chancel-arches of the plainest and earliest type, which are at least Early Norman, and may even be Saxon. In Coombes Church a blocked circular opening, below a Perpendicular window, is worth notice, for it was once a low side window, and is one of the strangest forms that such windows have taken.

Continuing on the track down the valley, we presently see on the high ground above us to the right the buildings of Lancing College, a noble monument to

the Rev. N. Woodard, who in 1849 devised his scheme for education on Church of England principles. Originally this comprised three schools—St. Nicholas, Lancing; St. John's, Hurstpierpoint; and St. Saviour's, Ardingly—but a few other schools have subsequently been taken under the same management. It is unfortunate that Lancing College Chapel has been planned on so colossal a scale, for, placed as it is high up on the Downs, it is disproportioned to its surroundings and out of keeping with the features of the scenery. The village of Lancing lies under the south slope of the Downs, and is about a mile to the west when we finally reach the road which crosses the Adur to Shoreham. There is but little reason for making a divergence to it. The church contains an Easter sepulchre and an old stoup, but is otherwise of small interest. The village is coupled with Shoreham in Swinburne's verse:—

“Winds are glancing from sun-bright Lancing to Shoreham
crowned with the grace of years,
Shoreham, clad with the sunset, glad and grave with glory
that death reveres.”

The name may possibly be derived from Wlencing, second son of the Saxon conqueror Ælla, who, it may be conjectured, may have felt that his younger brother Cissa need not be left to name all the places which their joint exertions had conquered. A new village, South Lancing, has sprung up recently by the sea, and is being now extended by the row of bungalows which stretches along the sand-spit near the mouth of the Adur.

Now we can finally turn eastward and cross the Adur for the last time to Shoreham. Besides the railway bridge, the estuary is also spanned by a picturesque

wooden bridge leading to Old Shoreham and a handsome suspension bridge built by the Duke of Norfolk in 1833.

The name Shoreham, *i.e.*, the "ham," or habitation, on the shore, indicates a Saxon origin, but the importance of the town begins with the Norman Conquest, when it was made the seaport for the rape of Bramber and placed under the rule of the powerful de Braoses. At this period the site of the town was what is now Old Shoreham, but before long, when the river began to silt up, the harbour was transferred to New Shoreham, a mile further south. The new town was of considerable importance, and furnished Edward III. with a contingent of twenty-six ships when he invaded France in 1346. The harbour has witnessed several important arrivals and departures. Here John landed[†] to claim the crown of England after Richard's death, and from here the noble William de Braose escaped in mean disguise from the wrath of the same monarch. A still more dramatic escape, which I have already described in Chapter VI., was that of Charles II. in 1651. Up to the last century Shoreham was a Parliamentary borough, returning two members, and was somewhat notorious for corruption. In this connection the election of 1770 is specially worth recording. The result of the poll gave Thomas Rumbold 87 votes, and John Purley 37 votes, but the returning officer rejected 76 votes given for Rumbold, and declared Purley elected. He explained before a committee of inquiry that the rejected votes belonged to members of the "Christian Society," ostensibly a charitable institution, but really an association

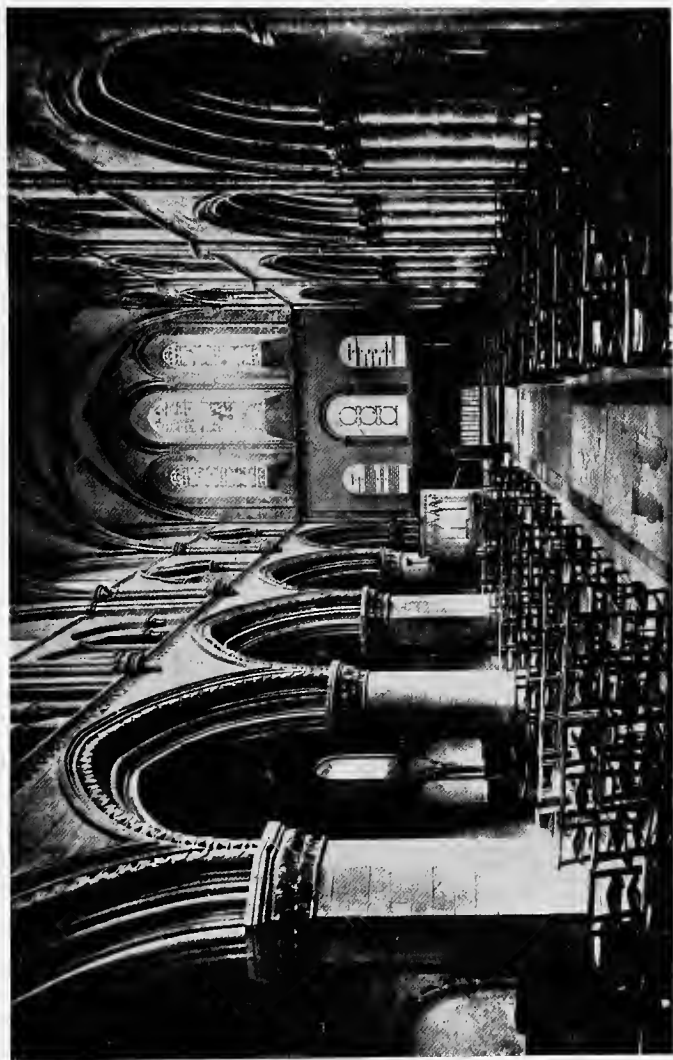
[†] This seems doubtful, for one authority makes him land at Seaford. In any case he sailed again soon afterwards from Shoreham to Normandy.

of voters who recognised that combination would enhance the market price of their votes. It was proved that at the election in question Mr. Rumbold had paid them £35 apiece. The result was that all the members of the "Society" were disfranchised, and the high-handed returning officer escaped with a reprimand.

The town itself is certainly not beautiful. The bustle of the seaport, a prosperous one judged by Sussex standards, lends a considerable amount of interest and picturesqueness to it, but it also adds an element of grime and untidiness. Yet New Shoreham will be dear to all lovers of the past, for right in its centre, separated from the other buildings by its spacious graveyard, rises one of the noblest churches in the South of England. Setting aside the Cathedral, there are only two churches in Sussex which can rival it—Boxgrove and Winchelsea; and, as we have already remarked, it is not a little strange that all three of these churches have lost their naves, the ruined foundations of which can be traced west of the existing buildings. New Shoreham Church is therefore but a stately fragment, but one deserving of the most careful study, for it illustrates admirably the progress of architecture in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. First there is the pure Early Norman, seen in the transepts, the one remaining bay of the nave, and the lower part of the tower; then the more graceful Transition-Norman of the lower part of the chancel, dating from nearly the end of the twelfth century. Lastly, we have the beautiful Early English of the upper part of the chancel. That the chancel ground-plan is entirely Transition-Norman seems evident, for Norman details are found in every part. But it seems probable that the triforium, clerestory, and

vaulting do not belong to the original chancel, but were built early in the thirteenth century to replace the earlier features. For Edward Sharp, the architect, who has written an account of the church, states that he believes that the present chancel is higher than the original one, and it may be added that the trefoil-headed arches of part of the triforium do not look like Transition work. If this is so, we are right in distinguishing three stages in the development of the church—Norman, Transition-Norman, and Early English. The chancel is remarkable both for the dignity of its proportions and the beauty and variety of its details. The Norman font of black marble is the finest in Sussex, and the tower, with one storey of Norman and another of Transition work, somewhat earlier than the chancel, worthily supports the dignity of the whole.

About a mile to the north is Old Shoreham Church, another fine building, and still more ancient. An old fragment of masonry in the north-west wall of the nave, with a blocked door in it, seems probably a part of the original Saxon church, which is mentioned in Domesday Book. Some authorities go so far as to call the whole of the nave Saxon. All the rest of the church, except the chancel, is pure Norman. The enriched central arches are very beautiful, but the church is somewhat gloomy from the fewness and smallness of the windows. The chancel shows later work, Early English and Decorated, the most remarkable feature being a tie-beam, with the dog-tooth moulding on it, which is rarely carved in wood. Both of these churches seem to have been built by the de Braoses, who, like so many Norman barons, tried to atone for their fierce and lawless lives by liberality to the Church.



NEW SHOREHAM CHURCH—CHANCEL

No account of Shoreham can be complete without some reference to Swinburne's haunting poem, "On the South Coast," which I have already quoted once in this chapter. I cannot resist the temptation of extracting four of the noble stanzas in which he describes New Shoreham Church—

"Strong as time and as faith sublime—clothed round with
shadows of hopes and fears,
Nights and morrows, and joys and sorrows, alive with pas-
sion of prayers and tears,
Stands the shrine that has seen decline eight hundred
waxing and waning years.

Tower set square to the storms of air and change of season
that glooms and glows,
Wall and roof of it tempest-proof and equat ever to suns
and snows,
Bright with riches of radiant niches and pillars smooth as a
straight stem grows.

Aisle and nave that the whetming wave of time has whelmed
not or touched or neared,
Arch and vault without stain or fault, by hands of craftsmen
we know not reared,
Time beheld them and time was quelled, and change passed
by them as one who feared.

* * * * *

Statelier still as the years fulfil their count, subserving her
sacred state,
Grows the hoary grey church whose story silence utters and
age makes great:
Statelier seems it than shines in dreams the face unveiled of
unvanquished fate."

The quotation is too long already, or I would like to add the beautiful stanzas describing "the foam-flecked estuary."



A glance at the map will show that the position of Shoreham with regard to the mouth of the Adur is somewhat peculiar. Although the river is quite close to the sea at Shoreham, it is turned eastward by a broad alluvial bank and only finds its exit a mile further on, opposite Kingston-by-Sea. Connected with this is another long arm of water, also separated from the sea by a bank and reaching eastward almost to Hove. The water in this arm is kept up by a lock, and it is often full of shipping. It is conjectured that anciently the mouth of the Adur was at the east end of this channel, close to Aldrington. Along the north side of the harbour so formed houses are almost continuous. First comes Kingston-by-Sea, which has an interesting church, including amongst other features an Early English tower with a groined roof supported on clustered pillars. Next comes Southwick, where the church has a good Norman tower, then Portslade-by-Sea, and finally Aldrington, where the church, after lying in ruins for 150 years, has at last been rebuilt. The story of how this village may have given a name to the Adur by being wrongly identified with the *Portus Adurni* has already been told in the last chapter. The old village of Portslade is a mile inland and has a good church, originally Transition-Norman, but largely altered to Early English. There is also in the village a ruined fragment of a manor-house with a double Norman window. The little hamlet of Hangleton, which is close by among the Downs to the north-east, has a farmhouse which was once a family mansion, originally of the thirteenth century, but largely rebuilt in the Tudor period. It shows several old gables, doors, and windows, of which the earliest, a lancet, may be seen in the stable. The present kitchen was formerly the chapel, and still

contains a screen, on the oak panels of which are carved the Ten Commandments, with the following couplet beneath, which uses no vowel except E—

“Persevere, ye perfect men ;
Ever keep these precepts ten.”¹

The plain little church is close by, which dates from early Norman, if not Saxon, times. West Blatchington, still more to the east, has a rebuilt church, retaining two Norman windows. It is a very remarkable fact that this little church was once absolutely the parish church of Brighton, the parish being “Blatchington-cum-Brighthelmstone” ! The same parish notices were issued for both churches and were until quite recently affixed to the ruins of the old church before it was rebuilt.

Turning south, we now soon reach Hove, considered by most people a suburb of Brighton. But, although the towns are co-terminous, Hove is a separate borough and proud of its independent position. Its old church, St. Andrew's, has two arcades of Transition-Norman, but little else that is old. A little further eastward and we are in the heart of Brighton.

¹ These details of Hangleton Manor are mostly not of my own observation, but borrowed from Mr. P. M. Johnston's account in the second volume of the *Victoria History of Sussex*.

CHAPTER IX

BRIGHTON AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

Brighton, Ovingdean, Rottingdean—Brighton to Lewes—Ditchling Beacon

DIRECTLY we enter the streets of Brighton we seem to step into a new world. All these acres of houses, with the busy, pleasure-seeking crowds which swarm round them, belong to a very different Sussex from the quiet country-side with which we have hitherto had to do. And yet, for all this, Brighton is a most characteristic part of Sussex. Its rapid and colossal increase is the most striking instance of the growth of seaside watering-places, which, in the course of the last century, has transformed the character of the county and quadrupled its population. The figures are so remarkable that a few may well be quoted. In 1801 the population of Sussex was about 160,000, in 1901 it was over 600,000. During the same period the joint population of the co-terminous boroughs of Brighton and Hove has risen from about 7,000 to 160,000. It will be noticed that this total is equal to the whole population of Sussex a century ago, and more than a quarter of the present population. If we consider the population of all the watering-places taken together, we shall find it accounts for more than half the present population and nearly two-thirds of the increase during the century.

Up till the middle of the eighteenth century Brighton was the fishing village of Brighthelmstone, described by the few who knew it as a small place "near Lewes." Its church, St. Nicholas, as we have already seen, was a chapel-of-ease to the insignificant parish of Blatchington. Small as it was, the village consisted of two parts—the colony of fishermen, usually called "jugs," who dwelt at the foot of the cliff, and a small band of landsmen who dwelt on its top, and whose relations with the jugs were not always too friendly. When Charles II. slept here on the last night before his escape, he probably felt that he could better lie concealed in so out-of-the-way a place than in the busy and populous town of Shoreham. The prosperity of the fishermen was occasionally interrupted by attacks of the French, who seem to have raided all places alike on the coast, both small and great, with fine impartiality, as occasion served. But about 1700 the sea made inroads yet more destructive, and the little cluster of huts at the foot of the cliff began to disappear piecemeal. Macaulay's graphic description of the village at this period has made it unnecessary for any subsequent writer to use his own words. "The sea was gradually gaining on the buildings, which at last almost entirely disappeared. . . . So desolate was the place after this calamity that the vicarage was thought scarcely worth having. A few poor fishermen, however, continued to dry their nets on these cliffs, on which now a town more than twice as large and populous as the Bristol of the Stuarts presents mile after mile its gay and fantastic front to the sea."

The causes of this transformation are well-known. It was due, in the first instance, to the recommendation of sea-bathing by fashionable doctors about

1750. The revival of both Brighton and Hastings at this time is due to this cause. Had this taken place in the nineteenth instead of in the eighteenth century, it is possible that the antiquarian interest and superior picturesqueness of Hastings might have secured it the advantage. But scenery was little considered in those days, and the attractions of the Sussex hills were hardly discovered ; though it would perhaps be unfair to quote the remark attributed to Dr. Johnson as typical, *i.e.*, that "a man would soon be so overcome by the dismalness of the Brighton Downs that he would hang himself, if he could find a tree strong enough to bear the rope, but that he would not be able to find it." (Did not the Doctor make a similar remark about the Scotch Highlands?) However this may be, Brighton outstripped Hastings for the simple reason that it is the nearest point on the sea-coast to London, and connected with the Metropolis by an excellent straight road. Thus it has a peculiar right to bear the name "London-by-the-Sea," and may perhaps be considered as much a "lung" of London as Hyde Park.

Somewhat later Brighton secured another great advantage in the patronage of George IV. To say that the Prince "invented Brighton," as Thackeray asserts in a well-known passage, is, as we have seen, not entirely accurate ; but certainly he helped to make it fashionable, and increased its prosperity, and, it must be added, its dissoluteness. He took a fancy to the place at his first visit in 1782, and two years later commenced the Pavilion, that curious monument of royal bad taste. Even in his own age, depraved as the standard of architecture was, it was condemned as an absurdity, and most people have heard Sidney Smith's *mot* that "The dome of St. Paul's has come down to Brighton and pupped."

Probably, however, Byron's criticism on the waste of public money appealed more directly to the English of that day :—

“Shut up—no, not the King ! but the Pavilion,
Or else 'twill cost us all another million.”

The buildings were sold by Queen Victoria to the Corporation, and, absurd and bizarre as they are, Brighton would hardly seem quite the same place without them. For a description of George IV. in the Pavilion, nothing could be more graphic than the account of Rodney Stone's visit with his uncle in Sir Conan Doyle's romance, followed by the exciting race against Sir John Lade along the Brighton road back to London.

The Brighton of the first half of the nineteenth century will be familiar to all readers of Thackeray, who was never tired of bringing his characters down here, and has left us a perfect gallery of brilliantly amusing pictures, such as George, Rawdon Crawley, and Jos swaggering along the esplanade ; Lord Kew driving Madame Pozzoprofondo, with Signor Pozzoprofondo sitting behind with the groom, or Philip interrupting the *tête-à-tête* of Agnes and the mulatto on the chain-pier. I venture to add one short extract from *The Newcomes*, a little before the much-quoted “Dr. Brighton” passage :—

“In Steyne Gardens, Brighton, the lodging-houses are among the most frequented in that city of lodging-houses. These mansions have bow-windows in front, ornamented with neat verandahs, from which you can behold the tide of humankind as it flows up and down the Steyne, and the blue ocean over which Britannia is said to rule, stretching brightly away eastward and

westward. The chain-pier, as everybody knows, runs intrepidly into the sea, which sometimes, in fine weather, bathes its feet with laughing wavelets, and anon, on stormy days, dashes over its sides in roaring foam. Here, for the sum of twopence, you can go out to sea, and pace this vast deck without need of a steward and a basin; you can watch the sun setting in splendour over Worthing, or illuminating with its rising glories the ups and downs of Rottingdean."

But it is necessary to set a limit to quotation, for the literature of Brighton is endless. There is Dickens's Paul Dombey yet unREFERRED to, with memories of Mrs. Pipchin and Dr. Blimber. And among modern writers perhaps one more may be quoted, that beautiful scene in William Black in which the Princess of Thule is taken to the sea at Brighton, but is sadly disappointed at finding it all so different from her rock-bound coasts of Shetland.

This last quotation will indicate the principal defect of Brighton. Brilliant and amusing as it is, few would venture to call it beautiful. In fact, it is probable that most visitors hardly stop to consider the point. The question obtrudes itself no more than it would in Piccadilly Circus or the Strand. Nor does the town retain much antiquarian interest. Its links with the past, though worth recalling, are very few. The Steyne, in which the Pavilion was built, has a name which recalls the old fishing village, for it simply means the stone on which the fishermen used to dry their nets. Equally suggestive is the dedication of the old parish church to St. Nicholas, the patron of sailors, whose name is borne by many churches on the South Coast. Surrounded as it now is by blocks of houses, it may take some time to find; but formerly it stood



OLD CHAIN PIER, BRIGHTON

From an engraving after the picture by J. M. W. Turner

alone on its bare hill, a conspicuous beacon far out at sea. The church has been rebuilt, but it retains its beautiful Norman font, with the Last Supper rudely carved on one side, and on the other scenes appropriately connected with fishing, the meaning of which is uncertain. Some authorities think they represent the legend of St. Nicholas. In the churchyard is another "link," the tomb of the gallant Captain Tattersall, or Tattersell, who conveyed Charles II. to France, as we have already seen. The epitaph duly belauds his patriotic action, but naturally says nothing about the mercenary spirit he displayed, and which so disgusted Colonel Gounter (see Chapter VI.). The inn in which Charles passed the night before embarking is now the Old King's Head (9, West Street). It was formerly the George Inn, but changed its sign at the Restoration, to the approbation of the patriotic Mrs. Thrale. "His black-wigged majesty," she writes, "has from the time of the Restoration been its sign." It is fair to add that some authorities do not consider the identity of the inn sufficiently established. Mr. Allen Fea, in *The Flight of the King*, states that "strange to say, the house" (in West Street) "is not described as an inn in the Brighton Court Rolls prior to the year 1754, whereas a building alluded to as 'The George' was standing on the east side of Middle Street a century earlier." Another link, the dear old chain-pier, was completely destroyed by a storm not very long ago. Brighton has now two piers, but neither can claim to be historic.

At Kemp Town, the east end of Brighton, the range of chalk cliffs begins, which stretches continuously to Beachy Head, broken only by the mouths of the Ouse and the Cuckmere. The cliffs near Brighton have not the beauty and grandeur of those further east. They

are low in themselves, and so straight that it is difficult to get views of them when walking on the top. When, therefore, the Brighton visitor makes an inevitable trip to Rottingdean, the only direction in which the houses can be escaped from without the aid of the railway, he should go, not by the cliffs, and certainly not by the hot, dusty road, with its procession of char-à-bancs and motor-cars, but by a breezy walk along the higher downs more inland. About half-way the track drops to the little village of Ovingdean, prettily situated in its cup-shaped valley, with the smooth downs swelling upward on all sides. Here is a tiny old church, with a good deal of work which is probably Saxon, but it has been built and rebuilt in patches so many times that the whole forms an architectural Chinese puzzle. It contains a Late Decorated oak screen. Ovingdean Grange has given a title to one of Ainsworth's books, which I must confess not to have read. It provides Charles II. with several unhistorical adventures, a fashion for which, I fear, Sir Walter's *Woodstock* must be held responsible.

Rottingdean lies in a long, narrow depression in the chalk, which reaches the sea by a narrow opening. Such chalk valleys are common in this district and are sometimes called "deans," sometimes "combes" (*cf.* Pyecombe, Telscombe). It is to be hoped that the village will never climb out of this valley on to the surrounding Downs, for then its peculiar picturesque-ness would be lost. Of late it has been the home of two distinguished men. Sir Edward Burne-Jones, though his principal home was in Kensington, had a country house here during the last years of his life. His remains now rest in the churchyard, and his work may still be seen in the stained glass of the east window. Rudyard Kipling also lived here for some years, and

wrote the fine poem to which I have already referred (Chapter III.). The quotation would perhaps have been better reserved till now, when the scenery it describes is all around us. The author has now moved inland to Burwash, but is still constant to Sussex, the scenery and historical lore of which adorn many of his works. It is probable that trippers came from Brighton to Rottingdean long before these famous men lived there, but the excursion may now be considered in some respects a pilgrimage. There is little to see. The church is pretty Early English, with a tower effectively placed between the chancel and the nave. Some peculiarities in the masonry indicate that the original walls were probably Saxon. Further eastward there is nothing but bare Down and cliff until Newhaven is reached.

There are several ways of accomplishing the journey from Brighton to Lewes. The first and easiest is by the railway, which takes little more than a quarter of an hour, the route being the deep valley that here divides the two branches of the Downs. The only station *en route*, Falmer, derives its sole interest from its nearness to the richly-wooded Stanmer Park, the seat of the Earl of Chichester, the present representative of the distinguished Pelham family, traces of whose power and influence are met with far and wide in this part of Sussex. For instance, a common architectural ornament of churches is the Pelham buckle, assumed by Sir John Pelham after the battle of Poitiers, in which he had helped to take prisoner the French King John.

Another route, for pedestrians, is to walk along the whole ridge of the Newmarket Downs, which form a second and subsidiary chain of hills, south of the railway and nearly in the same direction. Not having

taken this walk as yet I can give no details, but it should not be much inferior to the alternative pedestrian route—the glorious ramble by Ditchling Beacon and the main chain of the Downs.

Yet a fourth route may be mentioned for the benefit of cyclists. This is to take the London road until it is quite clear of the Downs, then to turn eastward and ride to Lewes, keeping the Downs on the right hand the whole way.

Both the third and fourth routes start on the main Brighton to London road. The first village, Preston, is really now nothing but a northern suburb of Brighton. It contains a pretty Early English church, well restored, and showing a remarkable series of wall-paintings, which were rescued at the restoration and carefully preserved. The east window is by Sir E. Burne-Jones. Proceeding northward along the road we soon pass on our right Hollingbury Castle, a finely shaped down crowned with an ancient entrenchment. The next village, Patcham, has a church with a good wall-painting representing the Last Judgment.

As the celebrated road climbs the Downs, the cyclist may possibly think that it is one of the worst he has ever experienced,¹ for it is repaired with flint, and in dry weather the dust lies on it several inches deep, through which the cycle has some difficulty in ploughing its way. We soon ascend to a third village, Pyecombe, which is well known in Down-land for its manufacture of shepherds' crooks. The little church has some good Early Norman work, and the last of the three leaden fonts in Sussex. The road now forks, the main London road descending the hill to the left. Our road, however, is straight on, over Clayton Hill. We soon have Wolstonbury on our left, so that we

¹ Written in 1906.

rejoin the main chain of the Downs just where we left it in Chapter VII. At the top of the hill the pedestrian and cyclist routes diverge, the former keeping along the crest of the Downs. We will trace this first, and then return to the other. Turning right, we climb to the two prominent wind-mills which here crown the ridge. Ditchling Beacon now rises straight ahead, and will be reached with very little extra trouble. It is a fine, steep-sided hill (813 feet), and was for a long time considered the highest point on the South Downs. In reality it is only the third, since Duncton and Linch Downs are higher. At the top there is a fine instance of the ancient entrenchments with which we are now familiar. Though, like many other camps, it is marked Roman on the Ordnance Map, it is really prehistoric, but was subsequently used by the Romans. The view over the Weald is very beautiful, but not to be compared with those from the more western summits of the Downs. The reason is that we are no longer looking over the Lower Greensand, but over the Wealden Clay, which gives a tamer country, less hilly and less finely wooded. The visitor from Brighton, however, is not likely to be in a critical frame of mind when the glorious prospect is actually before his eyes. In one respect the view may perhaps claim superiority. Though the Downs west of the Arun are somewhat higher, yet those between Wolstonbury and Lewes keep on the whole the highest continuous level, and, owing to the absence of lower sandhills in front of them, they certainly descend most steeply into the Weald. The Downs still continue bare of trees, and nowhere are their bold, swelling outlines seen to such advantage. The distant hills are on the Forest Ridge, among which can be distinguished Ashdown Forest and Crow-

borough. The villages dotted about the plain below are effective, particularly Ditchling, which is a mile and a half to the north.

Proceeding eastward we pass a huge "V," composed of fir-trees planted on the side of the Down, a memorial of Queen Victoria's Jubilee. Next comes Black Cap, a point crowned by a small clump of trees. The rest of the walk over Mount Harry and down into Lewes gives most fascinating views in front of Lewes itself and its surroundings, including the country south of it right to the sea. The descent is close to the race-course and over the celebrated battle-field. The whole ramble is one of the best and most characteristic Down walks to be had in Sussex.

Those who are driving or cycling must perforce take the longer route by the road north of the Downs, to which we now recur. After descending the break-neck Clayton Hill we discover that the railway has been tunnelling the Downs at the exact spot where the road crosses them. Just on the far side of the railway is Clayton Church, a quaint little building with a good Early English chancel, and a chancel-arch, either Saxon or Early Norman, showing three round-headed openings, which resemble those at Pyecombe and Ovingdean. The road to Ditchling is by Keymer, and keeps at first some distance from the Downs. Ditchling is a quiet and quaint village, containing some fine old gabled and timber-built houses, one of which is said to have belonged to Anne of Cleves. Right in the centre is the dignified church, chiefly Early English in structure, though nearly all the windows are later insertions, mostly Decorated. The nave is Transition-Norman, but very plain.

The road now returns to the Downs, and runs at

their foot for the rest of the way. The next village, Westmeston, is very picturesque, since it is embowered in trees and absolutely nestles under the mighty bastions of Ditchling Beacon. The church is pleasing to look at externally, and surrounded by some good yew-trees, but is disappointing on a closer inspection. The road next passes through Plumpton, which is of no interest, except to lovers of coursing races. When two miles from Lewes, it turns south and skirts the Offham quarries by a sort of terrace road, which gives good views, finally dropping into the town.

CHAPTER X

LEWES AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

Lewes—The Weald Country to the north and north-east—
South to Newhaven and Seaford

FEW Sussex towns give a more pleasing impression than Lewes. The Ouse, in itself an insignificant and muddy stream, here atones for its general scenic deficiencies by forming a magnificent cleft in the Downs, about three hundred yards wide at its narrowest part. On the left rises at once the steep-sided Cliffe Hill, a curiously detached part of the range, seamed on the west by a deep combe, and crowned at some distance to the south by the ancient earthwork of Mount Caburn. On the right bank, the upward slope towards Mount Harry, in the direction of Ditchling Beacon, is much more gradual. On the lower part of this slope, reaching down to the river, is built the town, with its red-tiled roofs clustering thickly round the ruined keep of the old castle, which rises above them in the centre. On the more level ground to the south is the pleasant suburb of Southover, where the picturesque-looking houses nestle amid trees and orchards, the thick growth of which conceals the ruins of the ancient Priory. Further south the river flows seaward over flat

meadows of little interest, but lying between the ends of two other chains of Downs—the Newmarket Hills to the right, which form a subsidiary chain to the Ditchling Beacon range; and to the left the continuation of the main ridge, stretching to Firle Beacon, and divided from the isolated mass of Cliffe Hill by the tidal waters of a stream called the Glynde. All these Downs show the bare side so characteristic of the eastern part of the chain. To appreciate the above details the view should be seen either from the leads of the old keep or from the surrounding Downs. But the picturesque aspects of Lewes are the least part of its interest. The crumbling ruins of Castle and Priory and the white monument on Cliffe Hill indicate a long and important history, which deserves a fuller treatment than can be given to it here.

In the case of most Sussex towns and villages it is fairly easy to trace the causes of their rise and fall, but the success of Lewes is somewhat difficult to explain. Why, for example, should its history have been so different from that of Bramber and Steyning, whose position on the Adur is so similar to that of Lewes on the Ouse? In Saxon times we hear of a mint at Lewes as at Steyning, and the towns seem of equal importance. At the Norman Conquest Lewes and Bramber were made the chief cities of adjoining rapes, and a strong castle was built in each by the great barons to whom the rapes were granted by the Conqueror. And in both cases an estuary which formerly stretched far inland has receded and transferred the course of trade to the seaport at its mouth. Yet Bramber and Steyning are to-day little more than villages, while Lewes is the most important inland town in Sussex. Whence, then, comes the difference? If we judged Bramber by the analogy of Lewes, we

should have expected Bramber and Steyning to have combined in one large and flourishing town. If we judged Lewes by the analogy of Bramber, we should have expected Lewes and Southover to be small isolated villages. Some light is indeed thrown on this difficult question by the consideration that Lewes differed from Bramber in being the point at which *two* routes from the sea converged, *i.e.*, not only the one up the Ouse valley from Seaford, but also that from Pevensey along the foot of the Downs, which was the natural route at a time when the Weald was still impenetrable forest. Yet, for all this, I am doubtful whether it can be shown that Lewes was in any marked degree a trade-centre. It is true that the first mention of the Sussex iron trade is a grant made by Henry III. to Lewes, in which the inhabitants are empowered to raise a tax on iron brought into the town. But Lewes was not particularly near the centres of the iron industry, nor, indeed, did any large towns of the type spring up on those centres.

In part, the rise of the town may be due to the energy of its first lord, William of Warrenne, who was left by William the Conqueror in charge of the rape, and built both castle and Priory. The story of the foundation of the latter is that he and his wife Gundrada started on a pilgrimage to Rome, but, owing to a war between the Pope and the Emperor, could not get farther than the monastery of Cluny. Here they were so hospitably entertained that they resolved in gratitude to found at Lewes the first Cluniac House in England. In 1088 William of Warrenne, who, as it seems probable, had just been created Earl of Surrey, was wounded while fighting for William Rufus at the siege of Pevensey, and carried home to Lewes to die. He and his wife were

buried together in the great Priory Church which they had built. This, in Henry VIII.'s reign, was so completely destroyed that the very site was lost, until in 1845 it was rediscovered by some workmen engaged in making the Brighton railway, and who, by a most extraordinary chance, came upon two small leaden coffins, inscribed Willelm and Gundrada, and obviously containing the bones of the joint founders. These are now placed in a chapel built for their reception at St. John's Church, Southover. Here, too, is Gundrada's tombstone, which also has suffered vicissitudes, for at the Dissolution it was removed to Isfield Church, whence it was brought back again in 1775. The inscription is highly interesting; one line runs—

“Martha fuit miseris; fuit ex pietate Maria.”

Gundrada was long considered to be a daughter or step-daughter of William the Conqueror. The last word in this discussion has been spoken by the historian Freeman (*English Historical Review*, 1888), who shows that neither tradition is historical. The only direct evidence is contained in two Lewes documents relating to the founding of the Priory, in one of which William I. called Gundrada his daughter, and in the other of which William of Warrenne calls Queen Matilda his wife's mother. But these documents are fifteenth-century copies, and known to be largely interpolated. On the other hand, Gundrada is known to be the sister of Gerbod the Fleming, Earl of Chester, who was son of another Gerbod. She cannot, therefore, be William's daughter, and there is no evidence that his Queen Matilda had previously married the elder Gerbod. Such a marriage is a mere assumption,

and Freeman adduces many reasons to show its extreme improbability. Moreover, on her tombstone Gundrada is called "*stirps ducum*," which does not point to a *royal* parentage.

William of Warrenne was followed by a son and grandson with the same names and titles as himself. The third Earl left only a daughter Isabel, who took for her second husband Hamelin, son of Geoffrey of Anjou. He assumed the name de Warrenne, was created Earl of Surrey, and so may be considered as second founder of the de Warrenne family, which remained powerful until its last member died in 1347, after which the estate fell to the Arundel family. Its most prominent member was John de Warrenne, Earl of Surrey, who was left by Edward I. as guardian of Scotland after the first conquest of that country in 1296, and was defeated the next year by Wallace at Cambuskenneth.

It was during the earlier part of the rule of this great baron that on May 14, 1264 the event occurred which has linked Lewes indissolubly to English history—the battle in which Simon de Montfort defeated Henry III. in the Barons' War. On the previous night Simon's forces were at Fletching, nine miles to the north of Lewes, where they spent the night solemnly in religious devotions. Meanwhile the Royal army was at Lewes itself, Henry III. having his headquarters at the Priory, and Prince Edward at the castle, and the night was passed by the Royalist soldiers in reckless riot and debauchery. Similar stories are told of the contrasted behaviour of the Normans and the Saxons before the battle of Hastings, and perhaps it is well to remember in both cases that our account of the battle is derived from the victors. At any rate it is clear that when early next morning Simon's army reached the

Downs, they ascended them quite unobserved close to Mount Harry (which clearly takes its name from the battle), and found only one sentinel asleep on the top, the rest of the picket which had been placed there having slipped back to join the revelry in the town. They next marched down the slope of the Downs till they reached a point from which the bell-tower of the Priory was visible. This point used to be marked by a windmill, which unfortunately has been lately destroyed. Here his whole army prostrated themselves in prayer, and then formed for battle in three divisions, a fourth, which was intended to act as a reserve, being commanded by Simon himself. They then recommenced the march downwards upon the town. Meanwhile the Royalists had been informed by some early foragers of the impending danger, and were forced to form in line hurriedly on the lower ground just in front of the town. Prince Edward commanded on the right; Richard, King of the Romans, the King's brother, on the left; and Henry himself in the centre, which was posted somewhat in the rear, and intended to act as a reserve. The battle was begun by Prince Edward, who, with a headlong charge, routed the Londoners opposed to him, and chased them far away down by the Offham quarries into the Weald. He then caught sight of a litter on the top of the Downs with Simon's banner on it, and hastened to attack it. It appears that Simon had broken his leg some months before, and although he had perfectly recovered, the Royalists were so ill-informed that they imagined him still incapacitated. It looks very much as if Simon had been "playing 'possum," and carried the litter about in order to create this very impression. At any rate Prince Edward expected to find him in the litter, and some unfortunate prisoners, who were the real

occupants, were ruthlessly slain by their friends before the mistake was discovered. Meanwhile, in the Prince's absence, Simon had seized his opportunity. Massing his right and centre together, and strengthening them with the reserve division, he flung himself on the King of the Romans, who, after a severe struggle, was defeated and driven off the field. The brunt of the fight now fell on the Royalist reserves, led by Henry himself, who, though not a warrior, strove gallantly to avoid defeat, but, after two horses had been killed under him, was finally forced back into the town, with the victorious enemy closely following, and driven to take refuge in the Priory. This was the state of affairs which Prince Edward discovered when he cut his way back into the town, but only in time to join in his father's surrender. Castle and Priory were handed over, and the Mise of Lewes was signed next day in the Priory itself. A touch of burlesque is added to the battle by the somewhat ignominious fate of the King of the Romans, who was discovered hiding in a windmill, and greeted with shouts of "Come out, thou bad miller!" "He makede him a castel of a mulne post," as the sarcastic song of the victors ran. The unfortunate Royalists fared hardly in the retreat, since there was no path of safety but the Ouse bridge, which was soon choked with fugitives. Some who attempted to escape over the tidal swamps of the river, which at that time filled the valley, were swallowed up entirely in the mud and suffocated.

The new white monument which was set up on Cliffe Hill in 1901 witnesses to another link between Lewes and English history. It perpetuates the memory of the Lewes martyrs, seventeen unfortunate victims of the Marian persecution, who in the years 1555-1557 were

burnt in front of what was then the "Star Inn," but it is now the Town Hall. The foremost among them was Richard Woodman, an ironmaster of Warbleton.

At present Lewes is not only an important railway centre, from which six lines diverge in various directions, but continues to be the Assize town of Sussex, and contains the county gaol. During the eighteenth century the principal business of the Assizes seems to have been the trying and imprisoning of smugglers. The skill and daring displayed by those lawless rascals were simply marvellous. It is not so much the sea-smugglers, whose business it was to land the cargo, who compel our unwilling admiration, as the land-smugglers, who had to transport it to a safe hiding-place and finally convey it to London. Still more wonderful is the vast organisation of the trade which is revealed. Thus, to give one illustration, Mr. Coker Egerton was told by an old Burwash parishioner, "Why, the cottage where we be now has many a time been as full of tubs from top to bottom as ever it could hold." His grandfather, he said, had brought up fourteen children all to the smuggling. "They were pretty lucky. Uncle Tom he got three months twice and then he gave it up, but none of the rest came to no harm." He then explained to me, adds Mr. Egerton, the whole arrangements for running cargoes, hiding them and getting them out of the country. He spoke with perfect openness and evidently with thorough knowledge. It really seems, when looking back, as if the whole of Sussex were banded together to help the smugglers. Even the parson was often indirectly their ally, as many amusing stories testify. For instance, it is said that at Guldeford, the most easterly village in the county, a notice

on the church door once stated that owing to the indisposition of the parson, there would be no Sunday service. The truth was that a hard-pressed band of "free-traders" had, late on Saturday night, induced him to let them hide their kegs in the church. It is clear that, when the vicar sets such an example, his whole flock will be in sympathy with the law breakers, even if they refrain from actively abetting them. But this fascinating subject is taking us too far away from the town of Lewes.

To ramble about the streets of Lewes is pure delight, for interesting associations start up on all hands. First comes naturally the old castle, with its two gateways—the outer Edwardian, the inner Norman and once part of William of Warrenne's original fortress; and with its lofty keep, the top of which contained the Museum of the Sussex Archæological Society (now in High Street), full of interesting objects. The castle once had the peculiarity of a second keep, Brackmont. No buildings remain on it, but the mound on which it was built stands at some distance in private grounds.

Returning to the High Street, we have to the left the new Town Hall, in front of which the martyrs were burnt; and to the right the parish church of St. Michael's, which has one of the three Norman round towers in Sussex, but is otherwise quite plain. Both these buildings have public clocks, which are locally called Ananias and Sapphira, because they are supposed never to indicate the same time. Inside the church are two fine brasses, and a monument to Sir Nicholas Pelham, 1559, relating how—

"What time the French sought to have sackt Sea-Foord
This Pelham did *rebel 'em* back aboard."

Further up the street is the beautiful Transition-Norman church of St. Ann's with a fine Norman font, and a memorial window to the Sussex historian, M. A. Lower, who was a resident in Lewes. Some of the pillars have capitals of a peculiar local type, to be found also at Beddingham, Rodmell, and Telscombe. Another church, St. John's *sub castro*, in the north of the town, also recalls this historian, for when it was rebuilt in its present hideous style, he succeeded in rescuing an old Saxon arch and a fourteenth-century tomb, which may be seen in the wall outside the church. All who write about the county have a large debt to acknowledge to Lower.

Another St. John's Church is in the picturesque suburb of Southover, and, as we have already seen, is the final resting-place of the first de Warrenne and his wife Gundrada, to receive whose remains a chapel has been built in the Norman style. The church itself is of little interest, but the plain arcades in the nave are Norman, and also the font.

Close by are the ruins of the Priory, which, however, are of little architectural interest, since the demolition ordered by Thomas Cromwell was so completely carried out. The few carved stones which remain have been transferred to the Castle Museum, and nothing is left *in situ* except shapeless masses of masonry. There are some remains of a winding staircase, on which, according to a local tradition, Henry VIII. is said to have murdered *one* of his wives! If we inquire too curiously *which* wife, the answer perhaps would be Anne of Cleves, who is known to have lived in the main street of Southover in an old house, which must, however, have been rebuilt soon after, for it now bears the apparently irrelevant date 1599. There seems something more here for

antiquaries to explain.¹ Just above it is a still finer old timber-built house. Southover House also is good Elizabethan and dated 1572. The Winterbourne, which runs past it, is only a winter stream, and in summer will be found a dry channel.

Across the bridge, in the suburb of Cliffe, is another old church, St. Thomas, which is Perpendicular throughout, and contains a foliated stoup, and a squint with two pillars in it—a very curious feature, of which we shall find another example at Rodmell Church, not far off. In this suburb also is Jireh Chapel, where is the tomb of William Huntingdon, S.S. (Sinner Saved), the evangelical coal-heaver. Further north we reach the suburb of Malling, where, at Old Malling Farm, is the site of an ancient collegiate church. Here the murderers of Becket rested on the day following the murder, and were appalled to find the table refused “to bear the sacrilegious burden of their arms,” throwing them violently off on to the ground. The legend is told at length in Dean Stanley’s *Memorials of Canterbury Cathedral*. The manor belonged to the Archbishop, a fact which apparently accounts for the loyalty of the table. None of the ancient buildings now remain except part of a Norman wall in the garden.

In accordance with the plan of this work, as explained in the Introduction, the neighbourhood of Lewes to the north will be considered to end, at any rate roughly, with the line of demarcation between the Wealden Clay and the Hastings Sand districts, the discussion of the latter being more conveniently grouped under the general account of the two Forest Ridges, both of which belong to that geological forma-

¹ Mr. P. M. Johnston states that the date refers only to the porch, which was built later than the rest of the house.

tion and are similar in scenery. The result is that the ramble we are about to take will be one of the least interesting in Sussex, since it deliberately turns away from the more pleasant hill-country and keeps to the comparatively flat clay soil. Moreover, the villages passed by are mostly uninteresting, with poor churches, and the routes connecting them are often very circuitous and complicated. In fact, this ramble must simply be taken as a description of a particular corner of Sussex, arranged as conveniently as the subject admits of, but not as suggesting a route which any cyclist or pedestrian will find it remunerative to follow.

Lewes is left by the north road, which runs along the hillside to the west of the valley, terrace-wise. This is perhaps the only point from which the Ouse valley looks pretty, except at Lewes itself. The little old church which is presently seen standing oddly on a chalk knoll in the middle of the valley, round which the Ouse forms a loop, is Hamsey, now only used as a mortuary chapel. It is mainly Norman and Early English, and worth the necessary divergence to see. Barcombe, the new village to the right, has a rebuilt church which need not tempt us. East Chilington and Street are at some distance to the left. The former village may be visited for its yew-tree, the latter for Street Place, a Jacobean house. There used to be a hiding-place shown behind the hall chimney, into which legend says a cavalier once rode to escape his Roundhead pursuers and never appeared again. Between six and seven miles north of Lewes we reach Chailey, where there is an Early English church with another old yew-tree, and an extensive and breezy common. Here we are on the borders of the Hastings Sand country, so we turn right to Newick, where the church has been much restored, but contains a Deco-

rated font of a simple pattern and a Perpendicular tower. The next village to be described is Isfield, which is in the Ouse valley, close to the point where the river receives its longest affluent, the Iron Brook, a stream flowing past Uckfield. To reach Isfield from Newick will require a considerable *détour* to the north-east, before the road leading south to it is struck. Here, at last, we find a church of some interest and beauty. The original building was Transition-Norman, in which style notice the window where the fragments of ancient glass have lately been collected ; but the most interesting parts are Decorated, *i.e.*, the chancel and the Shurley chapel. The large Decorated windows are very pleasing, and the church-lover will be glad to come upon them, since Decorated work is remarkably rare in Sussex. There is also an interesting series of Shurley memorials, mostly of the sixteenth century. Especially quaint is the epitaph on Sir John Shurley, some of whose children "were called into heaven and the others into several marriages of good quality." The Shurleys were lords of the manor and lived at Isfield Place, the old house not far north of the church. It has the Shurley arms over the door, and is curiously surrounded by an old stone wall, with four angle-towers. It was from Isfield church that Gundrada's tomb was recovered, where one of the Shurleys, being of an economical turn, had used it to form part of his own tomb. It seems that these Shurleys were connections of the Wiston family, though the name is spelt differently.

On the north-east is Little Horsted, where the rebuilt church is only remarkable for four small round-headed windows, which are close together and form an external arcade. A somewhat circuitous route south-west will next bring us to East Hoathly, where

the church has been rebuilt, but retains a Perpendicular tower, on the western side of which may be seen the Pelham buckle,—also a beautiful Norman pillar-piscina. Continuing in a south-west direction we reach Chiddingly, where the church possesses a Decorated tower, crowned by one of the five ancient stone spires in Sussex. It also contains a handsome Elizabethan monument to Sir John Jefferay. The mansion of the Jefferays is a little west of the church, and shows some remains in the Tudor and Elizabethan styles.

Proceeding southward, we now soon strike the main road between Lewes and Battle, where we turn again westward. Presently Laughton is reached, where over forty members of the Pelham family lie buried in the vaults of the church. Before the family removed to Stanmer, its seat was at Laughton Place, about two miles distant south-west, and only to be reached by one rough cart-track. It is surely one of the oddest places in which to build a family mansion—a lonely moated grange if ever there was one, surrounded by flat and barren plains, with hardly another habitation within two miles, and cut off from the world in all directions but one by the canals of the Glynde level. Little is left but one brick tower of the sixteenth century, which shows the Pelham buckle and lifts itself well above the solitary marshes. There is also an old building called the Granary at the angle of the moat.

The last village to be passed before Lewes is regained is Ringmer, noticeable for its pleasing Perpendicular church and for memories of Gilbert White of Selborne, who wrote here several of his letters.

The lower course of the Ouse, I must confess, I can never bring myself to admire. In common with most

of the Sussex rivers, it has but little beauty at any part of its course, and below Lewes it is nothing but a banked-up tidal stream, usually showing mud banks on either side of its dirty waters, and fringed by a succession of ragged marshy flats, by no means pleasant to the eye. It is true that there are the Downs rising on both sides, but they do not turn their best side to the valley, and diminish very sensibly in height as the river approaches the sea. The numerous villages, however, which stand just above the marshes, are mostly picturesque and interesting, especially those on the west. We will therefore descend on this side to Newhaven, then cross to Seaford, and return by the eastern side.

Starting on the road leading southward from Lewes, we first reach on the right of the road the little village of Kingston with its restored Decorated church, quite hid away among the Downs at the foot of Newmarket Hill. A little further is the farmhouse of Swanborough, formerly a grange of Lewes Priory, and containing a good deal of old work, from Early English to Perpendicular. The next village is Iford, where the church has excellent Norman work. Very beautiful is the interior view of the piers of the central tower, with the triplet of small round-headed windows at the east end showing as a background. Rodmell, about a mile further, has a still finer church, with Norman work showing some Transition details. The elaborate chancel-arch, the baptistery, the Norman squint with a fluted pillar in the centre (as at St. Thomas's, Lewes), and the Early Decorated chancel-screen are admirable features. One of the capitals in the nave is curious, and resembles those at St. Anne's, Lewes. At the next village, Southease, the valley narrows, and here is the first bridge over the Ouse below Lewes. The church

is of less interest, but has a plain Norman round tower. From Southease a road diverges up the Downs to secluded Telscombe, one of the remotest and most delightful of the Down villages. It is closely packed into a narrow steep-sided combe, the bottom of which it completely fills, so that the bare Downs rise above it on every side. The interesting church is almost entirely twelfth century, with a Norman nave and a Transition-Norman chancel; it contains also a stoup and a very beautiful font. A footpath down the combe will take the pedestrian back to the valley, but the cyclist who has made this divergence may find it difficult to avoid returning to Southease.

Resuming our descent of the Ouse valley, we next reach Piddinghoe, where, on a small hill sloping steeply to the river, there confronts us a church with the third of the Norman round towers. Why there should be only three of these round towers in Sussex, and no more, is somewhat of a puzzle. Some have thought that, as quarried stone which could be cut to form corners was rare among the Downs, they were built of convenient flints; but this would prove too much, for in that case there should be many more of them. The key may be given by the fact that all are at the foot of the Downs on the right bank of the Ouse valley, after it becomes tidal. It is therefore perhaps reasonable to suppose that in ancient times, when the estuary of the river was wider, these were beacon towers, intended to help in the navigation. Piddinghoe is thus mentioned in Rudyard Kipling's "Sussex":—

“Or south where windy Piddinghoe’s
Begildèd dolphin veers,
And black beside wide-bankèd Ouse
Lie down our Sussex steers.”

A mile and a half further we reach Newhaven, the most important port in Sussex. The Ouse originally ran on the east side of the valley, and had its mouth close to Seaford, which was formerly the seaport of the rape of Lewes. But in Queen Elizabeth's time it changed its course to the west side, and a new haven was formed at its mouth. This seaport still carries on a good deal of trade with France, to say nothing of the important line of steamers to Dieppe. The town cannot be described as a watering-place, for it is three quarters of a mile inland, there being no houses on the coast, only the breakwater with its lighthouse and the fort on the hill above to protect the harbour. The church is also on the hill, but it is too small and too much inland to be much use as the beacon-tower for a seafaring town. The central tower and the chancel are good, though plain, Early Norman, and the view inside, looking eastward, is much like that of Iford Church, only finer, because the east end is terminated by an apse. The view from the churchyard up the Ouse valley gives a more pleasing effect than most other views of it.

Crossing to the east side of the valley by Newhaven bridge, from which the view of the shipping is striking, we soon reach Bishopstone Station, where there are tide-mills. The village itself is a mile distant in a cup-shaped hollow of the Downs. The church is one of the most remarkable in Sussex, for it contains Saxon, Norman, and Early English work only, nothing later, and much of the detail is very beautiful. The only undoubted Saxon part is the south porch, which has long-and-short work, and a dial-plate with the name Eadric on it. The door shows Norman zigzag, added by a later hand. The tower is more doubtful. It has four stories, each a little smaller than the one below it.



BISHOPSTONE CHURCH

Some authorities consider it Saxon, but it is better to suppose it very Early Norman. Inside, Norman and Early English details are found in juxtaposition in every part, from which the probable inference is that the bulk of the church is Transition-Norman, though it may well have been completed in the Early English period. The two chancel arches should be noticed, and the vaulting of the inner chancel. Note also a curious slab, showing a lamb and doves drinking.

Seaford is now not far distant, and may be reached by a road which curiously runs for part of the way along the sea-beach. As we have already seen, it was originally the harbour of the rape of Lewes. Later on it was attached to Hastings as a corporate member of the Cinque Ports, and so acquired some importance. It has, however, little connection with history, except that it was sometimes attacked by the French—once on the occasion when Sir Nicholas Pelham repelled the invaders, as we learnt from his tombstone in Lewes. But presently the course of the Ouse shifted to Newhaven, whereupon the harbour silted up and the place became insignificant. It continued, however, until the Reform Bill of 1832, to be a borough town returning two members, and the usual stories are told about corruption. Of late years it has been rising into repute as a watering-place, but its development seems somehow to hang fire. The streets of the town itself are narrow and tortuous, and there is only one row of houses on the esplanade, which itself is a concrete erection on a bed of shingle. Between esplanade and town is an ugly and ragged depression full of sand and stones, which is an obvious eyesore and ought to be built over if the watering-place is to be a success. For lovers of sea-bathing and fishing in health-giving air, no doubt the place is already all that is to be

desired, and the beautiful chalk cliff to the eastward would make up for many shortcomings in the town itself. On the highest point is an ancient camp, half of which has already fallen into the waves. Its angular shape caused authorities to think for some time that it was more likely to be Roman than the other camps of Sussex, but it has now been decided that, like the others, it is really prehistoric. From the top there is the most extensive view of chalk cliff to be obtained in Sussex, stretching over Cuckmere Haven to the Seven Sisters Cliffs, which reach nearly to Beachy Head. In the church the nave arcades, with the clerestory, are of late Transition-Norman work. One of the capitals has carved on it a rude representation of the Crucifixion. The three successive stages of the tower are Norman, Transition-Norman, and Perpendicular, the latter cased in modern flint-work. Otherwise the church has been modernised.

It was near Seaford, in 1058, that two Flemish monks, Drogo and Balgar, successfully carried off to their own country the relics of the one female saint of Sussex—St. Lewinna. The story, as told by Drogo himself, is so strange and so characteristic of the age with which it deals, that it is worth retelling. The monks had been driven by stress of weather to land near Seaford on Easter Eve, and the next day, when searching for a place where they might attend mass, they were directed to the monastery of St. Andrew, where rested the bones of St. Lewinna, Virgin and Martyr, at whose tomb many miracles had been worked. The monks reached the monastery and attended mass, having first been shown the famous relics, which were kept in the chancel. After the service they remained in the church until the porter, having to leave for a short time, asked them to take

charge. Directly he was gone, they wrapped the precious bones in a cloth and got off safely with them before the porter returned, leaving behind some finger-bones only, that some memorial of the saint might remain in the church. The fact that the finger-bones fell out of the cloth twice seemed to them a sufficient indication that this was the wish of the saint. The strange thing is that this audacious theft was considered rather a meritorious action than otherwise. The site of St. Andrew's monastery is unknown. Lower thinks it may have been at Alfriston, while other authorities place it at Beddingham, south of Lewes. Of the life of St. Lewinna herself no details have been preserved.

The return journey to Lewes by the east side of the Ouse valley is pleasant, but of little interest. The road runs at the foot of the Down slopes, curving with the curves of the valley, so as to keep just above the marsh-land. After returning past Bishopstone three villages are passed in rapid succession. All of these are naturally east of the road, for on this side of the valley, as on the other, the villages had to be built on the only available sites, that is to say, on the comparatively high ground on either side just below the Downs. The centre of the valley, now filled with wettish meadows where the black oxen of Sussex graze, was formerly, as we have already seen, an extensive tidal swamp. The first village, Denton, which needs a slight *détour*, has a church containing a beautiful Norman font, a Decorated piscina and sedile, and an altar tomb, which may be an Easter sepulchre. South Heighton has only the site of a church burnt down last century. Tarring Neville has a church of slight importance except for the fact that the font is built into the wall. It has an aumbry with oak doors,

an unusual feature. The nave arcade is Transition-Norman, the rest of the church Early English. After this, there are no more villages till, at Beddingham, we join the Lewes and Eastbourne road, to be described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XI

LEWES TO EASTBOURNE

The Downs and Firle Beacon—Wilmington

THE chief attraction of the Lewes and Eastbourne road is that we are again travelling parallel to, and in full view of, the Downs, that glorious range which has accompanied our rambles so long, but which is now rapidly running seaward. We have now before us the fourth and last continuous stretch, from the gap at Lewes till the sea is finally reached. There is, indeed, another break made by the Cuckmere, but this is not equal in importance to the three due to the Arun, Adur, and Ouse. The range retains its effectiveness right to the end. Firle Beacon is a well-shaped hill, and the grand, rolling masses continue, one after another, until the chalk cliffs sink abruptly into the sea at Beachy Head. It is true that the Downs are no longer quite so high as they were, Firle Beacon itself being only 718 feet. But the country directly below them is also lower than in the west of the county, so that the relative effect is nearly the same. A certain number of trees still continue to diversify the northern escarpment, as, for instance, under Firle Beacon itself, but the gentler southern slopes still show their characteristic bareness—in fact, the beech-woods, so prominent in the western part of the chain, do not extend east of the Arun.

Starting from Lewes, we first cross the bridge over the Ouse, and then proceed southward through the suburb of Cliffe, passing close under a great white quarry which is doing its best to eat away Cliffe Hill. From the top of the first rise there is a fine retrospective view of Lewes. The road now skirts closely the foot of Mount Caburn, but turns away south just before running under the old entrenchment which crowns the summit. The road which goes straight on leads to Glynde, a pretty and well-wooded village with a modern church and an old manor-house built in 1567. Our own road, after crossing the Glynde, a tidal stream separating Mount Caburn from the Firls Beacon range, reaches the village of Beddingham. Here there is said to have been a monastery, but there are no ruins to confirm the tradition. The church is interesting, showing a Transition-Norman arcade, a Decorated clerestory, and a Perpendicular font and tower. Some of the Transition capitals resemble those at St. Anne's, Lewes, and at Rodmell, and seem characteristic of the neighbourhood. The next village is West Firls, which lies somewhat to the right of the road, under the Downs. Firls Place is the seat of Viscount Gage, who represents one of the most ancient Sussex families, tracing his descent from Sire de Gaugi, who fought at Hastings. The rebuilt church contains several monuments and brasses of the family. The earliest is dated 1476, and the rest belong to the sixteenth century. The most illustrious member of the family who is buried here is Sir John Gage, general and statesman. In 1542 he defeated the Scotch at Solway Moss. The next year he was sent to Scotland with a proposal of marriage between Edward VI. and the infant Mary Queen of Scots. The year after this he was joint commander

of the English army which took Boulogne. Being a Roman Catholic, he was in high favour with Mary Tudor in his old age. He died in 1556.

Firle Beacon might be ascended from here, but a walk more to be recommended is to climb the Downs near Beddingham, and to walk over the Beacon to Alfriston. The view from the summit is, of course, extensive. Looking northward, Mount Caburn stands up finely. As at Ditchling Beacon, the Wealden Clay country is prominent in front, and the view is consequently not equal to those from the western Downs. The villages in the Weald strike a characteristic note, since they are nearly all prettily embowered in trees, of which the intervening country, generally speaking, is somewhat destitute. The hills about a dozen miles to the north are part of the Southern Forest Ridge, between Heathfield and Brightling. If we look carefully, Brightling Beacon can be distinguished, and the two windmills at Cross-in-Hand. Southward a wide extent of sea is visible, with Newhaven very prominent. On the top of the Downs about here there is an unusually large number of ancient barrows.

The next village, Selmeston, is immediately left of the Eastbourne road. The rebuilt little church has a quaint feature, *i.e.*, a row of wooden pillars, in style Decorated. The road which passes through the village leads to Chalvington and Ripe (or Rype), two villages which have churches with good Decorated windows, a feature, as we have seen, somewhat rare in Sussex. Another short mile on the road, and the picturesque little village of Alciston is on the right. It nestles close under the Downs, with a little Early English church of not much importance, and a fine old pigeon-tower. The next village, Berwick, is also close to the Downs on the right, and is equally picturesque, the church spire

standing up effectively from a sea of green foliage. Inside the church there is a fine canopied tomb with Decorated tracery, also a font built into the wall, as at Tarring Neville.

Soon afterwards we pass the turn to Alfriston and cross the River Cuckmere. The gap in the Downs made by the river is full in view to the right, but for the present we turn away from it and keep to the Eastbourne road. Just where the line of the Downs recommences we have on our right another village—Wilmington—of higher interest than those which have lately been described. Here there was a Benedictine Priory, which set its mark in many ways on the neighbourhood. For instance, the plain type of square Decorated font, which is found in the church, is a pattern common to a good many neighbouring churches,¹ and may well be due to the monks. The Priory was suppressed in 1414 as an alien house. A few vestiges of the buildings will be found in a farmhouse near the church, the most important being an old Perpendicular gateway. About a mile to the south, on the side of the Downs, is the Long Man of Wilmington, a colossal outlined figure cut in the chalk, with extended arms, and grasping a staff in each hand. It is the only chalk monument existing on the South Downs, but its origin and meaning can only be considered in connection with similar figures in other parts of England. To suppose, as M. A. Lower does, that it may have been cut by the monks in idle moments, is a mere irrelevant conjecture, suggested by the proximity of the monastery. In 1874 the outline of the figure was remarked with white bricks, an arrange-

¹ It is found at Alfriston, Arlington, Barcombe, Beddingham, Eastbourne, Hurstmonceaux, Jevington, Southease, West Dean, Willingdon, and Wilmington.

ment which will obviate the necessity of further "scouring." Wilmington Church is exceedingly pretty and picturesque. Especially charming is the view on the north side, with its tiny Norman windows and fine adjacent yew-tree. The architecture is a little complex. It was originally Norman, but was much altered in the Decorated period, and has some inserted Perpendicular windows. The details, however, are less important than the general effect. It was melancholy, on the occasion of my last visit, to be told by the vicar that he might reluctantly be compelled to close the church owing to the irreverent conduct of some Eastbourne tourists, one of whom had actually written his name on the altar. Edburton Church has already been closed for this reason, and Winchelsea Church may well be the next, for the splendid Alard monuments are being grievously defaced by scratched initials. It is perfectly scandalous, at a time when the cause of open churches is gaining ground all over the country and proving an immense boon to all church-lovers, that the movement should be arrested in consequence of the selfish, and often sacrilegious, thoughtlessness of a minority of excursionists.

From near Wilmington there is a fine retrospective view of Firle Beacon. During the next three miles the Downs are little in view. The road is dusty and, as we approach Eastbourne, unpleasantly crowded with motors. We first skirt Folkington Park, in the grounds of which will be found a small Early English church of little interest. Then, when close to Polegate Station, we turn south, and presently reach Willingdon, the last village before Eastbourne. It is pleasant and well built, on a low chalk ridge, which runs out at right angles to the Downs, and with the fine Combe Hill standing grandly above. The church is mainly

good Early English, with some Perpendicular windows (note especially the south porch). Ratton Chapel, at the north-east corner, contains memorials of the Parker family, whose mansion was at Ratton, now used as a farm. The best way of reaching Eastbourne is to take the new lower road, which diverges left and runs past the newly formed Hampden Park.

CHAPTER XII

EASTBOURNE AND BEACHY HEAD

ALTHOUGH Eastbourne is the third largest of the Sussex watering-places, it is not yet fifty years old, for up till 1860 the only Eastbourne existing was the old town a mile from the sea. It is true that there must have been even then some seaside lodgings, else how could Charles Lamb, who hated watering-places as "neither town nor country," have penned the following comprehensive indictment? "We have been dull at Worthing one summer, duller at Brighton another, dullest at Eastbourne a third, and are at this moment doing dreary penance at Hastings!" Doubtless Lamb would not have altered his opinion had he seen the new town which has sprung up almost in the memory of our own generation; but I must declare at once that, so far from agreeing with him, I consider Eastbourne by far the most charming of Sussex watering-places. In the first place, what can be more delightful than its position with regard to the Downs? At Worthing, Brighton, and Seaford, there are downs of a sort, but only the tame southern slopes, not the real steep-sided range, which here, owing to the fortunate eastward lie of the coast, stretches along as a background to the town until it ends in the grand promontory of Beachy Head. Yet

many a beautiful site has been marred by bad building, and Eastbourne owes a deep debt of gratitude to the last two Dukes of Devonshire for saving it from such a fate. The great Cavendish family has one of its seats here at Compton Place, and owns most of the land. The result is such as to make us feel that there are occasionally advantages in a benevolent despotism. Under a democracy a town seems too often delivered over to the tender mercies of jerry-builders, or of a mercenary and unimaginative council of tradesmen, and it would be easy yet unkind to mention unfortunate places "where only man is vile," and where the beauty of the site only throws into greater prominence the ugliness or incongruity of the houses. Few will contend that, even at its best, our present style of building watering-places is ideal, and it may be that we have yet to discover one which will blend with the sea-view in perfect harmony. But meanwhile Eastbourne is a bright, well-built, and handsome town, with no conspicuous eyesores, and very little to object to. The houses facing the sea are mostly tall and stately, and not disfigured, as at Brighton, by an admixture of shops. And when we leave the sea we are conscious that the town has been built on a regular plan, which secures order without monotony. A very pleasant feature is, that nearly every street is planted with fine trees, so that the back of the town is quite different from those dreary wildernesses of bricks and mortar, which almost forbid the visitor to Brighton or Hastings from walking anywhere except on the parade. At Eastbourne itself, it must be stated at this point, the parade is most skilfully arranged. At the ends it is single, but in the central part, west of the pier, it consists of three tiers on different levels, and is pleasantly varied by some well-bedded-out garden

plots. A point a little east of the pier used to be called Splash Point, where at high tide the waves sometimes dashed over the parade, but an accumulation of gravel below has now deprived the name of its meaning. More to the westward is the Wish Tower, the first of the line of Martello towers, which stretch at intervals along the flat parts of the coast till far into Kent. They were erected by Pitt to keep the French from landing, and we may say, as the author of the *Ingoldsby Legends* says about the Military Canal which was dug for a similar purpose, "The job, though rather an expensive one, was found to answer remarkably well." For the French certainly never succeeded in breaking through the cordon of the Martello towers! The architecture of these towers is not strikingly picturesque; indeed, Mr. A. E. Knox describes them as "windmills deprived of their upper works."

The old parish church, which lies some distance inland, is well worth a visit. Inside, the arches and pillars, with the chancel arch and the clerestory of the nave, are good Transition-Norman, but the outside features are mostly Decorated. Of the three striking windows at the east end, that to the south is Geometrical (c. 1310). The central window is a modern one in the same style, but it is remarkably successful, and is one of the handsomest in Sussex. The window to the north is Curvilinear (c. 1340). The side windows of the church, which have been restored, belong generally to this later style. The font and the parclose screen are also Decorated. The tower, sedilia and piscina, Easter sepulchre, and a curious low chamber at the east end, are Perpendicular.

The steps of the visitor to Eastbourne are sure to turn ere long towards Beachy Head, the magnificent chalk headland where the range of the South Downs.

which we have been following so long, finally disappears in the sea. Its 500 feet of sheer cliff make it one of the most impressive sights of the English coast. There are very few cliffs in England which rise higher than 500 feet, the highest of all, so far as my knowledge reaches, being Boulby Head in Yorkshire, north of Whitby, which is close on 600 feet. The question as to which is the highest cliff is often confused by the irrelevant introduction of headlands like the Great Orme's Head or Pen Maen Mawr, which are not cliffs, but only hills which slope fairly steeply to the sea. To appreciate the full grandeur of Beachy Head, the visitor should not only climb it, but walk along the beach beneath its base. In the cliff-face a pair of peregrine falcons have built their nest for years, quite secure from the countless tourists who throng the cliffs above them. All of our commoner sea-birds also haunt the cliff, little disturbed by visitors, for they have always a safe refuge seaward, and have grown fearless since they have been protected by law against the cockney "sportsman." Many of the rarer kinds, however—for instance, several species of terns—prefer the flat, shingly beaches of Pevensey Bay.

The neighbourhood was in 1690 the scene of a naval fight, yet not one of those on which England can look back with pride. The French fleet under Tourville defeated the English and Dutch fleets, the result being due to the lukewarmness of the English commander, Lord Torrington, who, although he had carried the invitation to William of Orange the preceding year, was now repentant, and by keeping the English ships out of the fight, allowed the Dutch contingent to be severely handled.

The ascent of Beachy Head from Eastbourne can be made in half-a-dozen ways, of which the most



BEACHY HEAD

fascinating, though not the most direct, is the cliff-path. This first ascends a little, then descends again, and finally climbs a steep shoulder, where the many cracks in the turf are danger-signals, showing the frequency of landslips on the face of the chalk. At the top there is the inevitable coastguard station, near which are white patches at intervals, intended to guide the coastguards safely along the cliff on dark nights. As the visitor inhales the magnificent air, and watches the white-winged sea-birds flying round him, or clustering in groups on the cliff-face or on the surface of the sea, he may recall that it was on Beachy Head, in September, 1886, as the subscription of the poem tells us, that Swinburne wrote his ode "To a Sea-mew." Quotation can hardly do justice to the wild and sweet music of these verses. When referring to Swinburne I always want to quote him *in extenso*, perhaps for the same reason that no one would quote only a few notes or a few bars of a song. But the last three stanzas may be enough to recall the melody of the whole :—

' Our dreams have wings that falter,
 Our hearts bear hopes that die ;
 For thee no dream could better
 A life no fears may fetter,
 A pride no care can alter,
 That wots not whence or why
 Our dreams have wings that falter,
 Our hearts bear hopes that die.

With joy more fierce and sweeter
 Than joys we deem divine,
 Their lives, by time untarnished,
 Are girt about and garnished,
 Who match the waves' full metre
 And drink the wind's wild wine,
 With joy more fierce and sweeter
 Than joys we deem divine.

Ah, well were I for ever,
 Wouldst thou change lives with me,
And take my song's wild honey,
And give me back thy sunny
Wide eyes that weary never
 And wings that search the sea ;
Ah, well were I for ever,
 Wouldst thou change lives with me."

It is a beautiful walk along the cliff to the Belle Tout Lighthouse, which was built in 1831, but is now no longer used, a new lighthouse having been built below the headland in 1902. In the face of the cliff below is Parson Darby's Hole, a cave with steps leading to it. It is said to have been cut by a Vicar of East Dean as a refuge for shipwrecked sailors ; though some tale-bearer has unkindly suggested that the real refuge was for the parson himself—from his wife's tongue. Perhaps some later historian will discover that the parson was in league with smugglers, for the cave looks very fit for such a purpose. Somewhat further on is Birling Gap, the first break in the cliff-line ; after which the cliffs called the Seven Sisters stretch to Cuckmere Haven. The whole of the coast-line as far as Seaford is thoroughly delightful.

As we are now taking our leave of the Downs, this will be a convenient place to add a few remarks about the most striking features of their bird-life. They play a remarkable part in the annual migration of the smaller birds, who, not being so strong on the wing as the larger species, naturally take the shortest passage across the Channel, and find the Downs the most convenient resting-place when coming or going. Hence the Downs between Brighton and Eastbourne are crowded by flocks of migrant birds, both in spring and autumn, a fact by which the local bird-catcher

profits much. Another short passage from Mr. A. E. Knox may be here quoted, descriptive of the arrival of the wagtails at our shores in spring:—

“On fine days in March I have frequently seen pied wagtails approaching the coast, aided by a gentle breeze from the south, the well-known call-note being distinctly audible under such favourable circumstances from a considerable distance at sea, even long before the birds themselves could be perceived. The fields in the immediate neighbourhood, where but a short time before scarcely an individual was to be found, are soon tenanted by numbers of this species, and for several days they continue dropping on the beach in small parties.”

The most remarkable among these migrant species are the wheat-ears, who may almost be called part of the history of Sussex. They are summer visitors to England, and as they are shy birds and fond of bare hillsides, they regularly congregate in large numbers on the Downs in August and September, where they stay some weeks before crossing the sea to their winter home. At this time of the year they are plump and in good condition, and consequently have been much esteemed for centuries as a Sussex delicacy. They used to be taken by the shepherds in large quantities in T-shaped traps, cut in the turf. Not so long ago these traps were dotted about all over the Downs, but now the visitor will seldom, if ever, notice them. For one thing, the number of wheat-ears is stated to have very much diminished; but a more potent cause is that the bird has practically ceased to be an article of food, and the days are past when no Sussex banquet was considered complete without it.

Another ancient race which has long inhabited the Downs is of less importance in the present age, if

indeed it be not true, as Rudyard Kipling tells us, that they have already left the country. These are the fairies, curiously known in Sussex as Pharisees. The name is really an irregular plural, of a type common in Sussex speech. A writer on the county remarks that the old rhyme—

“I saw three ghostesses
Sitting on three postesses”

would sound quite right to Sussex ears. Thus the plural of fairy was naturally fairieses, and the subsequent change of spelling may perhaps be due to a hazy notion that to give fairies a name out of the Bible would in a way supply a proof of their real existence.

CHAPTER XIII

EASTBOURNE TO THE CUCKMERE VALLEY

Friston, West Dean, Alfriston, Michelham Priory, Hailsham

DURING our ramble from Lewes to Eastbourne we passed the entrance of the Cuckmere valley without stopping, for the best approach to it, which is now to be described, is over the Downs from Eastbourne. First, we have to climb the main line of the Downs themselves, the ascent of which has been made practicable to cyclists of moderate energy by the long and gentle zigzag of the Duke's Drive. At the top, Beachy Head is on our left, but this time we turn away from it, and take the road which crosses the bare but breezy uplands in a westerly direction. Presently a long valley opens in front, into which the road gradually drops. The upper parts are bare, with scattered patches of heather; but in the lower part small woods are dotted about with a pleasing effect. The road leads to the pretty village of East Dean, right in the centre of the valley, where the old church, though plain and rude, is worth a few minutes' stop. The square tower is Early Norman, but otherwise there are few ancient features, though the blocked-up arches and windows in the walls tell a complicated tale of Norman and Transition-Norman work. There is a foliated stoup and an old Norman font. After leaving

the village, our road climbs a steep and tortuous hill to Friston. Just before reaching the top there is a beautiful retrospective glimpse down a little wooded dingle to East Dean village, with the church standing up among thick trees, and the Belle Tout Lighthouse prominent over the Downs behind. Friston is a small hamlet quaintly set on the top of the Downs. Its ancient manor-house, Friston Place, may indeed be seen deep in the valley beyond; but the few houses, with the tall windmill and diminutive church, are all conspicuous landmarks on high ground. As at East Dean, the church is of high antiquity, and contains many blocked-up old arches. Those to the south of the nave are thought to be a Saxon door and window. The Norman chancel is very interesting, since there is a round arch right at the east end, with a recess beneath it. There are also side-arches, so that the little chancel is enclosed by four arches. The only original windows are the two foliated lancets in the chancel, which were reopened when the church was restored. In the porch is a mutilated stoup. There are some interesting memorials and brasses to the Selwyn family, formerly the lords of the manor. The best is a Jacobean monument dated 1613, where husband and wife are kneeling at a *prie-dieu*.

After passing Friston, the road continues for some time on the top of a long, high ridge, which gradually descends to the Cuckmere valley. From this point of the road there is one of the most characteristic views of the "back" part of the Downs, as they usually appear in the eastern part of the county. Immediately in front is the deep, narrow valley which starts at Jevington, two miles to the north, and, turning at right angles about Friston Place, descends past West Dean to the Cuckmere valley. Beyond it, and thrown well

into prominence by the contrast, there rises, as far on as the eye can see, a succession of "bare, smooth-swelling, unending Downs." No trees are in view except one patch in the valley below, but the variety of their rounded contours, and the soft tints of their diverse colouring, make the whole effect most restful to the eye. Directly north the view is bounded by Winddoor Hill above Wilmington, but further west Firle Beacon is conspicuous, and still further, the Downs which surround Lewes. Perhaps the view may be judged rather bleak, until, as we descend the ridge, West Dean, the most charming of all the Down villages, comes into view in the valley immediately below us, the thick trees among which it is set contrasting beautifully with the bare slopes around, and the ricks in front striking a vivid note of colour. The scene has been eloquently described by George Gissing in the last chapter of *Thyrza*. The road now descends steeply to Exceat Bridge on the Cuckmere; but, before describing the valley, West Dean itself deserves a closer inspection. To reach it, turn to the right twice directly after level ground is reached. Soon after entering the village we have on our left the ancient parsonage house—a most interesting building, the date of which is uncertain, but it is either of the thirteenth or the fourteenth century, most probably the former.¹ It has lately been restored, and the clergyman of the parish is still living in it. The principal marks of style are two pairs of foliated lancets, one facing east, the other west. Most of the other windows form shouldered arches. Inside are some old woodwork and cupboards of hard chalk. A little beyond is the church. The old Norman tower has an odd-looking gable on the western side. The tower-arch is also strange, for it is

¹ Mr. P. M. Johnston dates it *c.* 1280.

pure Norman on the west, and Transition-Norman on the east side. The walls of the church are probably the original Norman, with a very early blocked opening in the north wall. The windows are for the most part new, but there is a good deal of work in the church dating from the Decorated period, *i.e.*, the font, stoup, piscina, and two beautiful tombs, one of which is used as an Easter sepulchre. The Jacobean tomb is to a member of the Thomas family, whose manorial house stood in the midst of the village, its site being still marked by two ruined walls and a dove-cot. It is most probable that this village is the *Dene* where King Alfred had a royal country-house, and where the historian Asser narrates that he saw him for the first time, but the point cannot be considered as at all certain.

Now let us return to Exceat Bridge and look more steadily at the Cuckmere valley. Probably, after the beautiful hill-road by which we have reached it, it will prove somewhat disappointing. The river itself, after the too frequent fashion of Sussex streams, contributes nothing to the view, and the bare hills which flank its sides show neither steepness nor boldness of form. It has, so far as I know, only one panegyrist, Gissing, who is much in love with the whole of this country, and finds in the valley a "melancholy picturesqueness." If, however, we cross the bridge, and travel southwards along a rough track for a mile and a half, we reach the sea at Cuckmere Haven, a fine unspoiled piece of coast. It is the one river-mouth in Sussex on which no seaport has been built, and up to this day there are no houses but the coastguard station. On either side is a fine view of chalk cliffs, on the west the Seaford Downs, on the east the cliffs called the Seven Sisters, which stretch from the haven right to the turn close to Beachy Head.

Our course now lies up the valley to Alfriston. First we have to retrace our steps to Exceat Bridge, cross it, and ascend the valley by the road on the east side. About a mile above Exceat the valley rather improves, since Cradle Hill forms a steep bluff descending to the river on the west, while the east side is prettily wooded. Just to the right at Charleston Farm will be found some fragments of an ancient Transition-Norman chapel with a very pretty two-light window and a dove-cot, attributed to Alured, William I.'s cupbearer. Presently we reach Litlington—a pleasant village, with tea-gardens. The church, originally Norman, and mostly built of hard chalk, has Early English sedilia and a Perpendicular tomb, which may have been an Easter sepulchre.

A short mile further and we recross the Cuckmere by a footbridge and reach Alfriston, a very prettily situated village, full of interesting objects. We are now at the entrance of the gap by which the Cuckmere breaks through the main line of the Downs, and, as in the cases of the similar gaps formed by the Ouse and the Adur, all the beauty of the valley is concentrated at this point. The Cuckmere itself has, indeed, no charm, and few will quarrel with the judgment of the schoolboy (recorded by Miss Pagden, the historian of Alfriston) who, being acquainted with the Thames, remarked contemptuously of the Sussex stream, "Call that a river?—it's only a ditch!" But the beauty of the village is quite independent of the river, and is best seen from the Downs, which rise up from it on both sides. When viewed from above, the way in which the red-tiled houses, interspersed with trees and gardens, group themselves round the old church-tower is very fascinating. A little to the north, on the eastern bank of the river, can be traced the site of Burghlow Castle, clearly built to defend the Cuckmere. Miss Pagden

does not mention it, and it may have been unimportant, since the depth of the river mouth is insufficient for the landing of ships. Accordingly the lines of communication between Lewes and the sea-coast passed by way of either Seaford or Pevensey, and not through the Cuckmere valley at all. The grand cruciform church is of large size for a Sussex village, and is sometimes called the Cathedral of the Downs. The legend of its foundation is of a kind quite typical of East Sussex. The original intention of the founder was to build it on another site, but night after night the stones and timber were miraculously conveyed to the Tye, the piece of common-land where it now stands. Presently a wise man, noticing four oxen lying in the Tye in the form of a cross, advised that the church should be built there, and that it should be cruciform in shape. Its architecture, like that of Poynings, marks the interesting period when the Decorated style was changing to the Perpendicular, but most of the details recall the later rather than the earlier style. It is rather for the grandeur of its proportions and the dignity of the four massive central arches that the church is remarkable. On one side of the chancel is an Easter sepulchre, on the other beautiful sedilia, which, though obviously contemporary with the church, show the unusual feature of round arches. In the window of the north transept is a fragment of old glass representing St. Alphege. The corresponding figure of St. Andrew is a successful modern imitation. There are two deeply recessed low side windows under ogee canopies. Just south of the Tye, and close to the church, with which it is coeval, is the interesting ancient parsonage—a fine timber-built house with a thatched roof—which was purchased by the National Trust in 1898. The old hall shows some interior



VIEW NEAR ALFRINTON

timber-work. Another picturesque building is the old Star Inn, in date not much later than 1500, with very singular carving on the outside, including representations of St. George and the dragon and St. Giles with his hind. The old lion at the corner is said to be the figure-head of a Dutch ship wrecked in Cuckmere Haven. At the end of the street are the mutilated remains of a village cross, crowned with a later stone which looks like a hat. In many counties these crosses are common enough, but this is the only one in Sussex, excepting the beautiful market cross at Chichester.

South of Alfriston, on the Seaford road, are two other old houses—Burnt House, said to have been built by the scholar Thomas Chowne about 1600, burnt by accident in 1765, but replaced by a picturesque red-brick house; and Frog Firl, a little further south, which dates from 1538. These statements, together with those in the next paragraph, I derive from Miss Pagden's interesting history.

A hundred years ago Alfriston was notorious as one of the headquarters of the Sussex smugglers. We may infer that its position with regard to Cuckmere Haven, which alone among the Sussex river-mouths is undefended by a seaport town, made it peculiarly convenient for this illicit traffic. It is difficult, however, to believe that the authorities would not keep a special watch on this obviously dangerous point. Yet the extreme caution of those engaged in this lawless trade, which is quite as characteristic of them as their reckless daring, enabled them to outwit the revenue officers at every point. The "Alfriston gang," as it was called, was led by a young man of a respectable family, by name Stanton Collins, who for many years defied the law; and though his exploits were notorious all over

the neighbourhood, no evidence could be brought against him. At last, however, he fell ingloriously under the ignoble accusation of sheep-stealing, and was sentenced at Lewes to seven years' penal servitude. The "gang" seems occasionally to have been used for other purposes besides smuggling, and once it interfered in ecclesiastical matters. Mr. Betts, the minister of a Nonconformist chapel at Alfriston, had been ejected by the principal tenant of the chapel, who proposed to marry his deceased wife's sister, a union which the minister denounced. Public opinion at Alfriston was clearly not prepared to sanction such a marriage, and ran strongly in favour of Mr. Betts, so that when his successor first attempted to hold a service in the chapel the "gang" broke into the building, turned out the newcomer by force, and replaced Mr. Betts in the pulpit. This state of opinion, however, cannot be considered as typical of Sussex, for Richard Jefferies comments on a different standard in a village near Crowborough (perhaps Rotherfield), where one respectable inhabitant had married three sisters, one after the other.

Half way up the hillside to the east of Alfriston a tiny church nestles in a small grove of stunted trees, but is yet visible from most points of the valley below. This is Lullington Church, one of the claimants to be the "smallest church in England." If, indeed, by "church" we understand a building in which Divine Service is at present held, Lullington may perhaps establish its claim, for it is only 16 feet square. But it is not a complete church, for it merely consists of a chancel, while some fragments of a ruined nave are clearly traceable. It has five small windows, which exhibit the ogee curve in the head, a peculiarity which shows they belong to the Deco-

rated period. The body of the church is certainly much older, probably Early English.

A little north of Alfriston we strike again our route of Chapter XI., by which the traveller may return to Lewes or Eastbourne. Another alternative, if he is on foot, is to ramble all along the Downs to Beachy Head. This will take him by the pleasant and picturesque village of Wannock, where the pretty tea-gardens are a constant resort of Eastbourne visitors. Here there is a quaint old mill, with a strange female figure carved on it, and a beautiful wooded glen, a feature rare among the South Downs—if indeed Eastbourne waterworks have left any part of it still existing. The pass through the Downs which goes through Wannock leads to Jevington, where the church had an interesting Saxon tower, now quite spoilt by restoration. Some curious old carving above the porch (also Saxon) is worth seeing. It may represent our Lord bruising the serpent's head.

Yet another way of finishing the ramble would be to visit some places of interest lying somewhat higher up in the Cuckmere Valley. Passing by Berwick and Wilmington, described in Chapter XI., we presently reach Arlington, rather more than three miles north of Alfriston. Here, close to the river, is a well-restored church, with a very complicated history, and showing interesting bits of every style, from the carefully preserved Roman urn, found on the site, and the small Saxon window, to the two Perpendicular windows.

A little further up the valley is Michelham Priory, the ruins of a thirteenth-century foundation. This is decidedly the prettiest spot on the Cuckmere, for the river has been trained to run both sides of the buildings, thus forming an encircling moat, which is gay with floating lilies, and shaded by overhanging trees.

The old mill still keeps up its busy work, heedless of the fact that the monks who first set it going have been gone themselves for centuries. On the far side of the bridge which spans the moat there still rises the substantial fifteenth-century entrance-tower, of three stories, looking through which some Early English arches can be discovered. The present farmhouse incorporates several features of the old Priory, but it is somewhat difficult to get permission to see them.

The traveller can now strike the railway, which will take him back to Eastbourne, at Hellingly or at Hailsham. In Hellingly Church are some remarkable Transition-Norman windows, north of the chancel. A fragment of cable-moulding of the same date has been built into the wall of the north chapel, which is otherwise Early English. More interesting than the church is the timber-built house called Horselunges. Hailsham is a small town with an important cattle-market, a rope factory which supplies the ropes for executing criminals, and a Perpendicular church with a peal of eight bells, of which the tenor still rings the curfew. In the thirteenth century, considerably before it was rebuilt in its present style, this church was the subject of a remarkable quarrel between Bayham Abbey and Michelham Priory. All monastic foundations were always anxious to increase the number of parish churches under their management. Hailsham Church had been originally given to the Priory by Gilbert de Aquila in 1229, but fifty years later the Abbey claimed the church as a chapel to their church at Hellingly. The Bayham monks promptly ejected the Michelham nominee and seized the church by force, but found themselves excommunicated by the Bishop of Chichester, who took the side of the Priory, and were presently driven out by the arm of the law. They next

started a suit in the ecclesiastical courts, and got a decision in their favour. Though the Archbishop at once annulled it, they were emboldened to seize the church a second time. Excommunication and expulsion followed again in due order, after which the voice of reason was at last heard, and a compromise was arranged, *i.e.*, that Bayham Abbey should keep the church, but pay a rent to Michelham for the advowson.

A shorter circular tour from Eastbourne than the one described in this chapter would be the round by East Dean, Friston, Jevington, and Wannock.

CHAPTER XIV

PEVENSEY AND HURSTMONCEUX

EASTWARD from Eastbourne stretch for miles the flat marshes of Pevensey Level, once a huge inland bay, but from which the sea has now retired. Probably few visitors would care to pass this way if it were not for the castles of Pevensey and Hurstmonceux, and yet many of them must have felt, especially when looking backwards towards the Downs, that there is a greater beauty in this flat country than at first appears. Indeed, there is a special charm in a range of hills rising abruptly from flat marsh lands, as visitors to North Wales will know, who remember the views from Harlech Castle and Portmadoc.

All visitors to Eastbourne are taken, as a matter of course, to see Pevensey, but how many of them understand its transcendent historical interest! They linger among the ruins of the mediæval castle, but hardly notice the exterior circuit of bounding walls, though these are nearly a thousand years older and one of the best survivals of the Roman occupation of Britain.

It was believed by Sir G. B. Airy, late Astronomer Royal, that Julius Cæsar originally landed in Pevensey. Historians, however, have not been convinced by his arguments, and, indeed, Sussex may well leave to Kent

the distinction of being the first British soil trod by the Romans. The real history of Pevensey begins in the later years of the Roman occupation, when it was necessary to organise a special defence against the descents of the Saxons upon the coast. The "Saxon shore," as it was called, reaching from Norfolk to Sussex, was placed under the rule of a special Count, and nine fortresses were built at intervals to protect the more dangerous points. One of these fortresses was Pevensey, then called Anderida, after the name of the thick forest which covered what is now the Weald. As long as the Romans were still in Britain the Saxons were successfully repelled. But after their withdrawal the unaided Britons were unable to secure the defence. For some years, indeed, the Saxons were prevented from landing—at any rate, in East Sussex—so that in 477 the invading bands were forced to coast along the shore until, as we have seen, they at last found Chichester harbour undefended. Henceforward the danger came from the land and proved a more serious one, for the invaders, fighting their way gradually eastward, at last in 491 appeared before Anderida, which they besieged and took. In the ruthless words of the Saxon Chronicle, "they slew all that dwelt therein, nor was there henceforth one Briton left." This quotation has often been used as evidence of the usual methods of the Saxon invaders, but historians are now beginning to doubt the inference, and to think that the case of Anderida was recorded as being exceptional.

The Roman walls still encircle the enclosure that was Anderida. They are best seen from the road which runs outside them. At intervals there are nine round towers, most of which are solitary, but two on the west stand close together, on either side of what

was the *Porta Decumana*. All are large hollow cylinders of masonry, entirely filled with cement, which has proved so hard that it has endured even when the outside stone has crumbled away. The red tint of the cement in places is caused by the powdered Roman brick which was mixed with it. Also the bonding courses of the flat Roman brick can be traced, not continuous all round, but at different heights at different parts of the wall. On the south side the wall has disappeared, but M. A. Lower claims to have discovered its foundations. Two of the towers show some Norman work in the upper parts, which fact, together with the existence of a postern gate, indicates that the Roman wall was used as an exterior defence even after the castle had been founded inside it. Excavations are at present being made in the enclosed area. An old Roman well and several Roman coins and fragments of pottery have been found, but so far (January, 1909) nothing of first-rate importance.

Of Pevensey in Saxon times we hear nothing. No more houses seem to have been built in the enclosure itself, and the little town which arose to the east of it must have been restricted in size, for the sea at this time washed the south wall of the castle and overflowed all the flats of Pevensey Level. The name Westham seems to indicate an overflow of population to the west side when there was no more room for development on the east. The place must already have been, like Bosham and Bramber, a port of some importance when ships were small and flat-bottomed. In 1049 we hear of it as possessing a fleet. At length, in 1066, occurred the event which has made Pevensey world-famous—the advent of the Normans. In the words of the Bayeux tapestry, William the Conqueror “*magno navigio mare transivit et venit ad Pevenesæ.*”

The Duke's ship, *Mora*, was the first to cast anchor in the bay of Pevensey, where it waited for its consorts. According to the well-known story, as William was landing, being perhaps over-eager to enter the country which his heart coveted, he stumbled and fell. Consternation began to seize on his followers who witnessed the unlucky accident, but the Duke dexterously turned the evil omen by showing his hands all covered with Sussex clay and exclaiming, "By the splendour of God, I have taken seisin of my kingdom; the earth of England is in my two hands!" Like many others in early English history, this story is of doubtful authenticity. The chroniclers who relate it doubtless knew their classics, and the incident looks very like a second edition of the story told by Suetonius of Julius Cæsar's stumble when landing in Africa in 46 B.C., and how he parried the omen by exclaiming, "Teneo te, Africa." Directly William landed defences were hastily thrown up, but no attempt was made to dislodge the Normans, Harold being fully occupied with his namesake, the King of Norway.

In the division of the lands of Sussex after the Conquest, Pevensey became the chief town of the fifth rape, of which Robert Count of Mortain, William's own half-brother, was given the lordship. He chose to build his castle at Pevensey itself, in the south-east corner of the Roman enclosure, so that the same town was at once seaport and fortress for the rape, an arrangement which we shall also find in the sixth rape—that of Hastings. The castle has had an adventurous history and sustained four sieges. In 1088 Robert of Mortain supported the attempt of his elder brother, Odo, to set up Robert of Normandy as king instead of William Rufus. Odo himself took refuge in Pevensey Castle, which was besieged by Rufus and

taken after six weeks. Rufus, however, unwisely allowed Odo to enter Rochester Castle, with the result that he was rescued by his friends and only fell again into Rufus's power after a long siege of that castle as well. In the next reign Robert of Mortain's son William lost his estates by fighting on the wrong side at Tinchebrai, and Pevensey was conferred on Richer de L'Aigle or De Aquila, whence was derived the picturesque title "The Honour of the Eagle." When De Aquila in turn lost his estates for treason the castle fell into the hands of the Empress Matilda, and in 1144 was held for her against Stephen by Gilbert Earl of Pembroke. After a protracted blockade the castle again surrendered. Its subsequent changes of ownership would be tedious to recount. The third siege was in the Barons' War (1265), when the castle was held for Henry III. and successfully defended against Simon de Montfort the younger. Afterwards it was conferred on John of Gaunt, Earl of Lancaster, and the last siege came in 1399, when it was held for his son, not yet Henry IV., against the local partisans of Richard II. John de Pelham, who had been appointed Constable of Pevensey, was one of the faithful band who accompanied Henry from the time of his landing at Ravenspur, but the castle was successfully held in his absence by Lady Pelham, who sent at the time an interesting letter to her husband, still preserved, which Hallam, who quotes it¹ with modernised spelling, calls "probably one of the earliest instances of female penmanship." He somewhat unkindly adds, "By the badness of the grammar we may presume it to be her own." After asking for news of her husband she gives her own. "And, my dear lord," are her words, "if it

¹ *Literature of Europe*, chap. i. In a note Hallam adds, "It may pass for the oldest private letter in the English language."

like you for to know of my fare, I am here laid by in manner of a siege with the county of Sussex, Surrey, and a great parcel of Kent, so that I may nought out, no none victuals get me, but with much hard."

During John de Pelham's constablenesship, which lasted till 1429, some important State prisoners were kept at Pevensey under his custody, *i.e.*, Edward II., Duke of York, in 1405; Edmund, Earl of March, the rightful heir to the throne, and his brother Roger, from 1406 to 1409; Prince James of Scotland in 1414, and Joan of Navarre, Henry IV.'s widow, who was accused of witchcraft against her stepson, Henry V. In the next two centuries the development of artillery rendered the castle indefensible, and it gradually fell into decay, the stones, as usual, being used as a quarry for the neighbourhood. At last, in 1588, when England was preparing to repel the Invincible Armada, its dilapidated condition was noticed, and orders were given, but fortunately not carried out, that it should either be "re-edified or utterly razed." It was stated to contain two "demi-culverins of small value." One of these still lies in the enclosure, with the Tudor rose and the initials "E. R." to be plainly seen upon it. The other was presented in 1867 to the Royal Artillery Museum at Woolwich.

The castle as it exists to-day dates mainly from the time of Edward I. By that time the original Norman building must have been pretty well knocked to pieces by the three sieges it had already endured, so that very slight traces of it remain. The castle was built so as to include a part of the outer Roman wall in its circle of defence. The view from the west, with the remains of the moat in front, is highly picturesque. Of the two round towers which flanked the main gateway only the northern one is standing, and the drawbridge

which here crossed the moat has also disappeared. Three other round towers, all similar in character, project at intervals from the wall, the circuit of which is continuous. Inside there is little to see. The site of the chapel can be traced on the grass, with the ancient font close to it, and the mouth of the old well. A few fragments of ruined masonry indicate the site of the keep. Excavations on this spot in 1908 revealed the ground-plan of the ancient Norman keep as it was built by Robert de Mortain immediately after the Conquest.

The town of Pevensey also deserves some notice. It possessed a mayor and corporation from quite early times, and was attached to the Cinque Ports as a "limb" of Hastings. When, however, the sea retired southward, its importance declined, until the position of mayor became little more than a matter for a joke. "Though Mayor of Pevensey, I am still but a man," is a reported saying of one of these worthies. This and similar gibes have been doubtfully fathered by local tradition upon Andrew Boorde, traveller and physician under Henry VIII., who had house-property at Pevensey, inherited at his brother's death, and occasionally lived there himself. His house, in which Edward VI., according to another local tradition, once paid him a visit, is still pointed out, though divided into cottages. As he died in 1549, Edward must have been less than twelve years old at the time. Considering that there is no historical confirmation of such a visit, and also that Andrew passed the last six months of his life in the Fleet prison, it is probable that the whole tradition grew out of the mistaken idea that he was the King's jester. He has also been absurdly called the original merry-andrew; but though one well-known jest is certainly his, there is no evidence

that he wrote humorous books, such as *The Merie Tales of the Mad Men of Gotam*, which have been persistently attributed to him.

The insignia of the corporation, which was only dissolved in 1885, are preserved in a case in the church, including the mace, the constable's truncheon, and the seal, which dates from the thirteenth century. The building itself is interesting. The chancel is Early English, but retains two Transition-Norman arches. The nave is slightly more developed work, with some Early Geometrical windows. The rude ancient font and a ruined stoup are still preserved. Westham Church is also worth visiting. The original Norman work can be seen in the south transept and the south wall of nave, where there is a row of three Early Norman windows. The handsome nave arcades and the massive dignified tower are Decorated; the rest of the windows and most of the fittings Perpendicular. The latter include, among many interesting features, an oak rood-screen, a font, and a stoup.

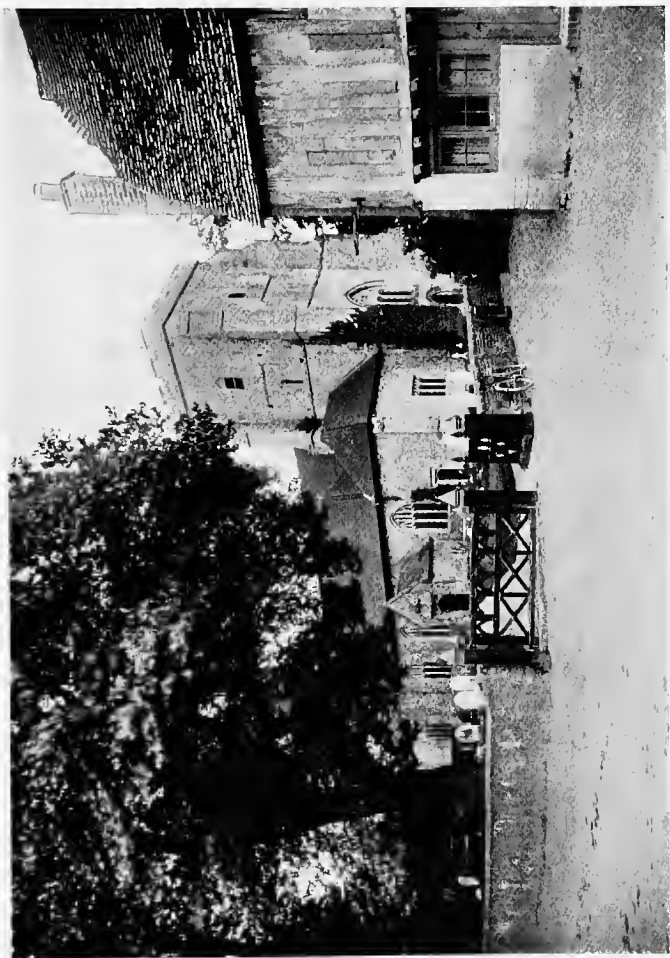
Louis Jennings' visit to the church¹ was unfortunate, for he found it undergoing restoration; an experience, I may add, which has three times been my own in viewing the Sussex churches. "The whole of the inside was literally gutted; the walls had been torn down and were lying in confused heaps on the floor; mortar was being mixed on gravestones with ancient crosses carved upon them; the pews, communion-table, windows—all were clean gone. 'What are you doing to the church?' said I to a man who was hammering away on an old slab. 'We be a-restoring of un,' he replied, without looking up. I fled in horror from the scene." The suggestion of this passage that the church was in process of being spoiled has not been borne

¹ *Field Paths and Green Lanes.*

out by results, for the restoration has been one of the more careful sort, and nothing has been harmed.

From Pevensey to Hurstmonceaux it is four miles. The road is mainly along the flat marshland of the Level, with a dyke bounding it on either side, from beyond which the black and red cattle lazily lift their heads and stare at the passing stranger. The flats are left at Wartling, which has nothing to show the visitor except a Late Decorated window in the church, marking clearly the transition to Perpendicular. Hurstmonceaux is about a mile further on.

The name is derived from Waleran de Monceux, who held the manor from about 1200 A.D. The present castle, however, was built in 1440 by Sir Roger de Fienes, an Agincourt hero, whose descendants, the Lords Dacre of the South, lived here till the beginning of the eighteenth century. In 1540 the ninth Lord Dacre was one of the nobles who received Anne of Cleves on her entrance into England. The next year the youthful nobleman, who was not more than twenty-four years old, foolishly took part in a madcap poaching expedition into the deer-forest of his neighbour, Sir Nicholas Pelham. The result was an affray with three keepers, in which one of them was killed. Lord Dacre was tried before his peers, and, on learning that a verdict of murder could not be avoided, he abandoned his defence and threw himself on the King's mercy. No mercy was to be had, and the unfortunate lord was executed at Tyburn on St. Peter's Day, 1541. Froude extols Henry VIII.'s conduct as a conspicuous instance of his impartial justice between rich and poor; but it rather strikes us as a characteristic act of atrocious tyranny, for Lord Dacre had had nothing to do with the actual murder, since the poachers had separated into two



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parties, and he was not with the party which fell in with the game-keepers.

In 1708 the estate was sold to a George Naylor, from whom it descended to his connections, the Hares. In 1777 the interior of the castle was dismantled by Canon Hare. The transaction was thoroughly discreditable to all parties concerned. The Canon was induced to commit this act of spoliation by the representations of his second wife, whose motive was to spite her two stepsons by erecting a new mansion on unentailed ground, the succession to which they would not be able to claim. The notorious Wyatt, arch-vandal of those times, took a highly characteristic part in recommending the demolition of the castle as unsafe and building the thoroughly ugly Hurstmonceaux Place. It is satisfactory to learn that the lady overreached herself, for the site of the new mansion was discovered to be entailed equally with the old. At any rate, the general public may feel they have been gainers, for the beautiful ruins are open for all to see, whereas, if the castle had been still a private mansion, we should probably have had to be content with a bare view from the outside.

Hurstmonceaux Castle in many ways presents a remarkable contrast to Pevensey. To begin with, it is entirely of brick, and by far the most effective brick building in Sussex, the next, perhaps, but after an interval, being Danny. It is rather a castellated mansion than a castle, and though it wears a martial air, with its towers and half-towers surrounding it at regular intervals, and is encircled by a moat (now dry), which expanded to a lake on the eastern side, yet it has a much more habitable look than the grim stone towers of Pevensey. As a matter of fact we hear of no fighting here, so that this warlike exterior was

hardly needed. The usual view of the castle shows the highly picturesque gateway, with its round towers and fine machicolations. Above the archway should be observed the shield of the de Fienes, with their supporter, the wolf-dog. The inside has not found so much favour with photographers, which is certainly a pity, for it is hardly inferior in romantic beauty. It contained four interior courts or quadrangles, but the ruin is so complete that it is very difficult, without the help of a plan, to distinguish the smaller courts from the larger rooms. The two largest courts—Green Court and Pump Court—have been thrown into one, and form the chief open space in the interior. Most visitors will be content, without caring too much for details, to let their eyes dwell on the tumbled masses of red masonry, the ruined mullions of the windows, the luxuriant ivy which mantles over the whole, and the blue sky above. I feel convinced that the scene must look its best, as I last saw it, in the mellow September sunshine. Perhaps the most beautiful view is looking eastward, with the octagonal turret above and the ruined window of the chapel below. Very good effects are also to be got by passing through the postern gate into the garden to the north, which is kept gay with flowers. The view looking back through the postern gate is very striking, and from the raised terrace at the end the best *coup d'œil* of the whole can be gained.

The remaining points of interest we may notice in the company of Horace Walpole, who visited it in 1752, when it was already uninhabited but not yet demolished, and wrote his impressions in a lively and racy letter to Richard Bentley, dated August 5th. "The castle," he writes, "is seated at the end of a large vale, five miles in a direct line to the sea, with

wings of blue hills covered with wood, one of which falls down to the house in a sweep of one hundred acres. It was built in the time of Henry VI., and is as perfect as the first day. It does not seem to have been ever quite finished, or at least that age was not arrived at the luxury of whitewash" (fortunately! a modern commentator may here interpolate); "for almost all the walls are in their native *brick-hood*. . . . The chapel is small and mean; the Virgin and seven long, lean saints, ill-done, remain in the windows; there have been four more, but they seem to have been removed for light; and we actually found St. Catherine and another gentlewoman, with a church in her hand, exiled into the buttery." (All these points have disappeared, and nothing remains of the chapel save the bare mullions of the three-light east window, already mentioned.) "There is a dungeon that gives a delightful idea of living in the days of soccage and such goodly tenures. . . ." (at the south-east corner). "They showed us a dismal chamber, which they call Drummer's Hall, and suppose that Mr. Addison's comedy is derived from it."

The legend is that the chamber, which is above the main entrance, is haunted by the sound of a ghostly drum, which is heard from it at intervals, and supposed to be the guardian of buried treasure. The beautiful simplicity of the story has been spoilt both by the lovers of the grotesque, who have imagined a colossal drummer nine feet high striding along the ramparts and beating an infernal tattoo, and by the rationalists, who think that the drum was meant to warn smugglers when the revenue officers were on the prowl. According to Mr. A. J. C. Hare, who has a special claim to knowledge of Hurstmonceux, a belief in the "apparition" version of the legend was

quite common a hundred years ago. He adds an apposite quotation from "Mr. Addison's comedy" (*The Drummer, or the Haunted House*), where one of the characters says, "Pho! Robin, I tell ye he never appeared yet, but in the shape of the sound of a drum." However, it is hardly necessary to add that "Fantome," the drummer in the comedy, is merely a mortal who has disguised himself to carry out his designs.

Walpole, however, has not mentioned a chamber which has a far better right to be haunted, *i.e.*, the Lady's Bower on the east side, where the semi-octagonal projection has been altered to cylindrical, and filled with a good oriel window. For it was here that Grace Naylor, the young and beautiful heiress of George Naylor, a girl of sweet disposition and almost universally beloved, was, in 1727, if the hideous story be true, slowly starved to death by her jealous governess. A tablet to her memory will be found in the church. It was because of her premature death that the succession fell to the Hares. Mr. Hare, however, suggests an alternative explanation, namely, that the governess may have induced the girl to live on a small quantity of food in order to give her one of the slim waists that were so much admired at the time; but that, being of a delicate nature, she was unable to rally after the strain.

Hurstmonceux Place, whose foundation we have already described, was remarkable, early in the nineteenth century, as the home of the four brothers Hare, whose lives are told at length by their nephew, Mr. A. J. C. Hare, in *Memorials of a Quiet Life*—a work to which I referred in the last paragraph. It contains one of the best detailed descriptions of



LADY'S BOWER, HURSTMONCEUX CASTLE

Hurstmonceux. Augustus and Julius, the second and third brothers, were the authors of *Guesses at Truth*, and Julius was Archdeacon of Lewes, and for twenty-one years Rector of Hurstmonceux. He lies buried, with several others of his family, under the great yew-tree in the churchyard. "The excellences and attainments of the later representatives of the Hares of Hurstmonceux throw a halo over the connection of their family with the place; and such examples and influence are of infinitely greater importance than castellated fortresses and magnificent palaces" (C. S. Harington).¹

The path to the church is up a steep slope to the south-west, "with ships sailing on our left hand the whole way," as Horace Walpole adds. As the ships are quite six miles off, it requires a strong imagination to bring them into the picture. "Before the altar," he proceeds, "lies a lank brass knight hight William Fienes chevalier, who obit MCCCCV, that is in 1405" (he was father of the builder of the castle). "By the altar is a beautiful tomb, all in our trefoil taste, varied into a thousand little canopies and patterns, and two knights reposing on their backs." As, however, Horace Walpole gets the names wrong, we will break off the quotation at this point. The tomb, which deserves all the praise bestowed on it, is to Thomas, eighth Lord Dacre (died 1534), and his son, also Thomas, who died before him. The inscription omits to add that Lord Dacre was imprisoned in the Fleet towards the end of his life. The unfortunate ninth Lord Dacre, executed by Henry VIII., was his grandson. The tomb was to be used as an Easter sepulchre. The original church was Transition-Norman, but most of the windows are Perpendicular

¹ The author of an excellent local guide-book.

insertions, and the font is of a simple Decorated pattern.

Between Pevensey and Hastings the coast continues flat and without interest. Only one town is passed—Bexhill, a short time ago a small village, but now a popular and rapidly growing watering-place. Its population was in 1901 over twelve thousand, ten thousand of which have been added in the last twenty years. The manor principally belonged to the late Earl De la Warr, and the development of the place was mainly due to his care. It is well built and bright in appearance. One feature is that there is no pier, only a "Kursaal," where the band plays. The distant view of Beachy Head is very effective. The little village from which the watering-place has developed lies about half a mile inland. The old church has been largely rebuilt, but shows a few old features. The nave has three old bays, two Norman and one Early English, and there is a Norman archway inside the tower. Under it has been fixed a child's coffin slab with very curious patterns on it. It is Saxon, and may be as old as the eighth century. The north aisle also shows some ancient work. In the churchyard is a curious sundial showing the date 1599. Between Bexhill and Hastings is the site of the ruined Bulverhythe, once classed under Hastings as a corporate member of the Cinque Ports. Five other small places were classed with it, but they have all disappeared.

Between Hurstmonceux and Hastings is the village of Hooe. The small Perpendicular church has a little old painted glass with figures of Edward III. and Queen Philippa.

CHAPTER XV

HASTINGS AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

Hastings and St. Leonards—Battle and Ashburnham—Bodiam Castle and the River Rother—Northiam and Brede

ONCE again, as at Brighton, we plunge into a wilderness of bricks and mortar, but this time it is no small fishing village that has developed into a mighty town, but a venerable Cinque Port, with a name famous in history, with which the commonplace additions of last century seem singularly incongruous. In spite of the similarity of the name, it seems established that the notorious Danish sea-rover Hasting or Hasten had nothing to do with its foundation. The original Saxon village was built on the small harbour west of the hill on which the castle stands, and became so prosperous that in the reign of King Æthelstan (A.D. 924) a mint was established here, at the same time that others established at Chichester and Winchelsea. In the next century the first harbour began to silt up and a new town was founded on another little harbour lying eastward of the Castle Hill. By this time the town was beginning to be well known for its fleet. Its first appearance in English history was when the worthless Swegen, eldest son of Earl Godwin, fled

from England after murdering Beorn, and was chased by Hastings ships far down the Channel. Hardly more than two years later the Hastings mariners were among those who enthusiastically supported Earl Godwin himself on his return to England after the temporary eclipse of his power.

Shortly afterwards occurred the event which has made the name of Hastings familiar to everybody—the advent of William the Conqueror. It is singular, however, to reflect how very small a part the town really played in the drama of the Conquest. All that we know is that William marched here from Pevensey on September 28, 1066, and occupied the town with apparently no resistance; that it was his headquarters for about a fortnight, during which he scoured the country for provisions; that he constructed here a sort of fortress with a palisade; and finally that he marched northward to meet Harold at Battle on October 14th. The construction of the fortress is depicted for us on the Bayeux tapestry, but its position is extremely uncertain. Most probably it was on the Castle Hill, on the site where the Norman castle was soon afterwards to rise.

In the division of Sussex after the Conquest, Hastings became the chief town of the sixth and most easterly rape, and was entrusted to Robert Earl of Eu. He at once built his castle on the steep hill between the two harbours, so that, as at Pevensey, the same town served for both port and fortress of the whole rape. In this castle the first tournament in England is said to have been held, with the Conqueror's daughter as Queen of Beauty. William Rufus was here in 1090 and convened an assemblage of the neighbouring barons to do him homage. After this the castle seems to disappear from history.

Its very ruins had vanished until the excavations of its late owner, the Earl of Chichester, discovered some interesting and picturesque fragments. These now crown the hill and add a charm to the whole town, but require little description. A ruined square tower shows a Norman window, and a reconstructed arch and some other features are Early English, but otherwise there are few marks of style.

In the thirteenth century Hastings seems again to take a prominent position in history as chief of the Cinque Ports. Why it had originally been selected for this honour in the Norman period is by no means clear. The early importance of the castle may have partly determined the choice, and it was at first considered the natural seaport for the passage to Normandy. Also it seems probable that its importance was increased by the possession of extensive North Sea fisheries. For some time it was noted for shipbuilding, for which the extensive woods of the Southern Forest Ridge furnished abundant timber, but in reality it soon fell behind its neighbour and rival, Winchelsea, which supplanted it both as a passage port to Normandy and as an important fishing station. We hear little of those fierce fights with the French which make the annals of Rye and Winchelsea so lurid. Presently the fate of all Sussex harbours overtook the town. First the western harbour silted up and the town was entirely transferred to the narrow valley close to the eastern harbour. Then this also silted up, and the town seemed doomed to sink, like Pevensey, into an insignificant village. But, about 1750, fashionable doctors began to recommend sea bathing, and Hastings started on a second lease of life as a popular watering-place. The limits of the Old Town, in the narrow valley

aforesaid, were soon overpassed, and houses were built to the west of the Castle Hill, whence they quickly spread westward. In 1828 St. Leonards was founded, and both towns grew rapidly until at last they joined, and now form a continuous sea-front of $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles. The old arch which for some time was supposed to mark the boundary between the two towns has been taken down, and few visitors could point out where one town ends and the other begins.

The town has not produced any illustrious men, for it is probably not proud of Titus Oates, the record of whose baptism may be seen in the register of All Saints' Church, of which his father was rector. Rather, everybody concerned with the honour of the place will be thoroughly glad to learn that he had to fly in a hurry from it, after he had been convicted of perjury and slander against the mayor. It has had, however, several distinguished visitors. Charles Lamb is quite outspoken in his dislike of the place. "I love town or country," he says, "but this detestable Cinque Port is neither." This indictment is too comprehensive to have anything about it personal to Hastings. What he really dislikes is the modern fashionable watering-place. If Hastings were again a small fishing village he would be content. "If it were what it was in its primitive shape, and what it ought to have remained, a fair honest fishing town and no more, it were something—with a few straggling fishermen's huts scattered about, artless as its cliffs, and with their materials filched from them—it were something. I could abide to dwell with Meshech ; to associate with fisher-swains and smugglers. There are, or I dream there are, many of this latter occupation here. Their faces become

the place. I like a smuggler. He is the only honest thief. He robs nothing but the revenue, an abstraction I never greatly cared about. I could go out with them in their mackerel boats, or about their less ostensible business, with great satisfaction." All of us feel like this at times, but such feelings, though natural, are surely selfish. What they mean is that we wish to escape from the crowd of our fellow-visitors, who, we feel certain, cannot appreciate the place as we do, and to have it entirely to ourselves. Rather, when we are inclined to abuse the mob of tourists, let each of us mentally add "of whom I am one."

Lord Byron, when here in August, 1814, seems to have put Lamb's aspirations into practice, for he writes: "I have been smuggling neat brandies and silk handkerchiefs, walking on cliffs and tumbling down hills, and making the most of the *dolce far niente* for the last fortnight." Other poets who have lived here have been Campbell and Coventry Patmore.

From a scenic point of view Hastings stands midway between Brighton and Eastbourne. At Brighton, scenery in the true sense can hardly be said to exist; at Eastbourne the whole situation, though modern, is thoroughly delightful. Hastings has several effective points, such as, in particular, the red-roofed fishing village and the ruins which crown the steep castle rock, both of which also impart the requisite flavour of antiquity. But the mass of the modern houses is at least incongruous, and a dreary region of red brick and stucco is rapidly spreading at the back of the town. If these modern additions can be ignored or kept in the background the views of the place are often charming. From the sea, for instance, if the lower houses can be decently veiled in fog or smoke, while the castle ruin and the cliffs stand out in bright

sunlight, the effect is very beautiful, as Turner's well-known picture abundantly shows. Also, if we are looking down from the castle ruins themselves, with the line of the parade stretching away below us and the rest of the town in comparative obscurity, the view is again charming. Yet again, it is pleasant to take our stand on the higher part of the Castle Hill and look down on the red roofs of the Old Town, closely packed in the narrow valley below. If the houses could only have been prevented from straggling over the Castle Hill itself, or up the hillside beyond, the effect would be better; but even as it is, it is picturesque enough. Moreover, the visitor must not fail to descend into the narrow streets of the Old Town itself and inspect the two fine Perpendicular churches of All Saints' and St. Clement's, with their ancient fonts, sedilia, and brasses. St. Clement's Caves are said to owe their origin to smugglers, but the statement lacks confirmation. They seem in their origin to be natural, but to have been partly altered by human agency.

The first excursion which the visitor to Hastings is usually led to take is to see Hollington Church, "the church in the wood." What he expects to see is not obvious, for the church has been restored and offers no point of interest except a pentagonal font. It is, however, remarkable for the legend of its foundation, which is a quaint bit of Sussex folklore. The original founders built the church in the open, but the "poor man," *alias* the devil, removed it to the wood, hoping to discourage church-goers. "His Majesty," one may surmise, must be somewhat disappointed with the actual result of his endeavours. It may be stated that legends of supernatural interference with church-building are characteristic of East Sussex. There are at least five instances.



HASTINGS

From an engraving after the picture by F. M. W. Turner

But the chief beauty of Hastings has yet to be mentioned—the sandstone cliffs which line the coast to the east of the town. They belong to the formation known in geology as the Hastings Sand, which forms the central and highest district of the Sussex Weald, and running in a broad belt right through the county reaches the sea at Hastings. Here it breaks off in a fine cliff-line of reddish-yellow rock, which stretches for about six miles and is intersected by highly romantic valleys. The first of these cliffs is the detached mass on which the castle stands, after which the line is more continuous. Ecclesbourne Glen, about half a mile to the east, is the first of these valleys, but its beauty hardly prepares us for the loveliness of Fairlight Glen, a mile and a half further on. Not only is the glen itself beautifully wooded, but the steep, broken cliffs descend on both sides to a sort of undercliff, where trees grow thick quite close to the water's edge. No fairer scene is to be found on the coast of South-east England. Beyond it is the usual Lovers' Seat, about which a somewhat commonplace love-story is told. About three miles further on is Cliff End, where the Hastings Sand sinks abruptly to the level plain.

One of the advertised attractions of Fairlight Glen is a so-called dripping well. Also, about two miles north of Hastings, there is a "waterfall" which visitors are sometimes taken to see, picturesquely called the Old Roar. To prevent disappointment, it may be as well to point out that, as Hastings is entirely backed at no great distance by the high table-land of the Southern Forest Ridge, it is impossible that either of these should have more than a feeble trickle of water.

Battle, about seven miles north-west of Hastings, is perhaps the most interesting spot in Sussex, for it is the place where William the Conqueror, whose steps we have already followed carefully at Pevensey and Hastings, overthrew Harold in a decisive battle on October 14, 1066. If we leave Hastings by the London road, we shall follow the exact route of William's army. But it is well to take the rather longer route by Crowhurst, which has some points of interest, especially the ruins of a small ancient manor-house dating from the latter part of the thirteenth century. The church has a Perpendicular tower, showing the Pelham buckle, and close by it is a celebrated yew-tree of fabulous girth, the largest and oldest in the county.

The town of Battle takes its name from Battle Abbey, around which it has grown up. Before attempting to describe the battle, it is best to begin with the abbey, for its investigation will throw a flood of light on the topography of the great struggle. When William was arming for the fight, he is said to have inadvertently put on his shirt of mail with the hind side in front. Partly in order to avert the bad omen he vowed that, if victorious, he would build on the very site of the battle a great abbey to St. Martin. Accordingly, one of his earliest actions after his victory was to bring over a party of monks to found the abbey. These monks began to build in the valley below, protesting that there was no water to be had on the bare hillside, which was then only an uninhabited moor, but William insisted that the abbey must be on the battlefield. "They should have," he promised them, "more wine than there was water in any other abbey." The abbey was not completed in William's lifetime, and was finally dedicated by William Rufus in 1094.

About it there has sprung up quite a small town, which, together with the thick-growing trees and gardens, makes it very difficult to picture the bleak moor, without a single house, on which the battle was fought.

Among the privileges granted to the favoured abbey there was one—freedom from episcopal jurisdiction—which led to interminable strife. This was constantly being disputed, and involved the abbots in a long series of wrangles with bishops and archbishops. Another privilege was that of keeping the famous roll of Battle Abbey, on which were inscribed the names of all the knights who had fought at Hastings. Afterwards, when a Norman descent became fashionable, the monks must have made a good thing of it by adding fresh names. This, however, was done so frequently that the roll presently lost all historical value, so that the loss was not great when it was taken to Cowdray and perished in the great fire there. The supposed copies of it are at hopeless variance with one another. To so important an abbey we naturally hear of several royal visitors. King John visited it four times, on the first occasion depositing upon the altar a piece of the Holy Sepulchre brought from Palestine. Edward I. was its guest in 1276 and 1302, and Edward II. in 1324. In 1377 a French invading force was defeated at Winchelsea by the bravery of the abbot of the time.

At last came the inevitable visit of Thomas Cromwell's Commissioners, followed by the dissolution of the abbey and the expulsion of the monks. It proved one of the richest of the abbeys, the confiscated funds amounting to over £800 a year, an enormous income in those days, though the income of Lewes Priory was even greater. The buildings were given to Sir Anthony Browne, on whom, as we have already seen,

the so-called "Curse of Cowdray" was pronounced by one of the departing monks.¹ He added to the Abbot's Lodge, which he had taken as a dwelling-house, a west wing, for the use of his ward, the Princess Elizabeth. His son, the first Lord Montague, built a further addition, on the site of what is now the terrace, but only two stair-turrets remain. The migration of the family to Cowdray about this time involved a corresponding neglect of Battle, and the buildings fell into decay, until in 1857 Lord Cleveland bought them and turned them into the present beautiful family mansion.

The remains of the abbey, though fragmentary, are very interesting. The gateway, built in 1338, is a beautiful example of Decorated work. Gateways of the fifteenth century are common enough, but those of the fourteenth, although far more beautiful, are quite rare; accordingly so perfect a specimen is an architectural treasure. To see the interior the visitor must come on a Tuesday. The Abbot's Lodge, which is only shown if the family are absent, contains two good rooms, the great hall, and the locutory, the latter of which has thirteenth-century vaulting, supported on three pillars. Visitors are next taken to the terrace, whence there is the best view over the battle-field. The site of the great Abbey Church lies north of the house. There is a story that William was told in a dream that his dynasty would rule in England for as many years as there were feet in the length of the church. Accordingly he marked it out for 500 feet, but a supernatural agency altered the length every night to 315 feet. The story is unsatisfactory, for it indicates the date 1381, on which nothing happened. This

¹ See Chapter III.



THE CRYPT, BATTLE ABBEY

magnificent church was completely destroyed by Sir Anthony Browne, an act for which the virtuous baronet is not so much to be blamed as the robber King who gave him the buildings; for what should a gentleman do with a cathedral in his private garden? Yet Sir Anthony can hardly escape the name iconoclast; for he need not have destroyed cloisters and chapter-house as well.

A fragment of the nave wall may be seen in the woodyard, but all the rest had completely disappeared, until excavations in 1817 revealed the foundations of the crypt at the east end, and the site of the High Altar, which lies exactly between two ruined staircases leading up from the crypt. This site is of the highest interest, for, by William's command, the High Altar was placed on the exact spot where Harold fought and fell, and which was carefully marked after the battle for this very purpose.

After inspecting the triple apse of the crypt, the visitor is next taken to the east of the house, and given in passing a view of some beautiful arcading upon it, which is all that remains of the cloisters. Before us is now the one considerable part of the abbey which remains detached from the house. The upper part of this, a fine Early English hall, is usually called the Refectory. Below it are three beautiful vaulted chambers in the same style. The uppermost of these may fairly be described as a crypt, but the others are more spacious. The lower, sometimes called the Scriptorium, is perhaps the most lovely piece of ruined architecture in Sussex. It is lighted by a fine geometrical window, and the vaulted roof is supported on three graceful pillars. All the ruins now form part of a luxuriant, carefully cultivated garden.

Imagination must now sweep all this away, and pic-

ture as the scene of the battle a nameless and desolate moor. Professor Freeman taught us awhile to call it Senlac, but the name is obviously Norman, and so, even if its authenticity be granted, was only given to the site by the Normans after the battle. It is a small plateau about 200 feet high, from which the ground falls away pretty steeply to the south, and then rises again to another hill of about the same height, called Telham Hill, whence William is said to have "told" or counted his men. Further north the plateau rises higher, to about 350 feet, and finally at the Watch Oak connects with the Southern Forest Ridge, of which it is a southern spur (not of the Downs, an inaccurate statement very often made). To the west is a small ravine, in which flows the rivulet Asten, which is supposed to have run red ever since the battle. Indeed, it does so still, for its springs are tinged with iron. Over the plateau ran the road from Hastings to London, with the forest trees thickly penning it, except where the bare heath took their place. The lower slope seemed to Harold the more defensible position, because of the steepish ground in front, and here he posted his army in a long but compact line, the mailed warriors in front, wielding enormous battle-axes, and forming a continuous and formidable shield-wall, and the half-armed fyrd and hastily raised levies massed in the rear. In the centre, on the spot at which we have just gazed, stood Harold and his brothers, surrounded by the house-carls, and with two standards floating above them, the royal dragon of Wessex and Harold's own standard of the Fighting Man. The position was formidable, and indeed almost impregnable so long as the shield-wall held firm. The great interest of the battle lies not only in the fact that it was a conflict of nationalities, but also one in which infantry, in a

strong defensive position, was to be attacked by cavalry and archers.

As a prelude to the fight came the romantic exploits and death of the Norman champion Taillefer, who rushed single-handed on the enemy. Then the real battle commenced. After first annoying the Saxons with a flight of arrows, William led his cavalry to the charge in three divisions. But the attack broke hopelessly against the shield-wall, and the Normans recoiled in such confusion that the battle seemed lost, and a terrifying report spread that their leader had been slain. "I still live," exclaimed William, as he tore off his helmet, "and with God's help will win the day yet." Some of Harold's troops, heedless of his orders, had broken their ranks and rushed down into the valley in pursuit, but they now reformed the shield-wall and waited for the renewed attack. A second time the Normans charged, in the same formation as before. In the centre William with his half-brothers, Odo and Robert of Mortain, advanced straight against Harold and his brothers, Gurth and Leofwine, and a Homeric combat ensued between the chieftains. Gurth slew William's horse, but was himself slain by a tremendous blow of William's mace. Leofwine also fell, perhaps struck down by Odo. Yet in spite of these successes the attack again failed. William had three horses killed under him before he realised that retreat was again necessary. But now the crafty Norman devised a stratagem which entirely changed the fate of the battle. His whole army broke into a feigned flight, and many of the English eagerly rushed down from the plateau to pursue them. When too late they found they were caught in a trap. A body of cavalry pushed in between them and their friends, and very few of them made good their retreat to the plateau.

The shield-wall now showed many gaps, into which the Norman cavalry eagerly rode, and the whole of Harold's army seemed on the point of breaking up. But, even though defeated, the English closed their ranks as well as they might, and still plied their axes with desperate and stubborn valour. Hour after hour passed, and the ring of house-carls, who fought round Harold himself, could not be pierced. It seemed even yet possible that Harold might manage to withdraw part of his troops under cover of night. At last, as evening was falling, William ordered his archers to shoot straight up into the air. Down came the pitiless shower on the English, and one fatal arrow pierced Harold's eye and laid him on the ground. The Normans now at last broke through the defence, and the day closed with the utter rout of the English, William finally pitching his tent on the spot where his slain rival had stood in the fight.

In the place of this wild scene of desolation and slaughter there now reigns peace, a beautiful garden dotted here and there with the abbey ruins, and with the quiet church-tower lifting itself up from outside the encircling wall. Yet still, in Tennyson's words—

“Fancy hears the ring
Of harness, and that deathful arrow sing,
And Saxon battle-axe clang on Norman helm.
Here rose the dragon-banner of our realm;
Here fought, here fell, our Norman-slandered King.
O garden blossoming out of English blood!
O strange hate-healer Time! We stroll and stare,
Where might made right eight hundred years ago.”¹

Battle Church is somewhat complex in its architecture. The nave-arcades and the font are good Transition-Norman; the west part of the chancel

¹ See note at end of chapter.

somewhat later Transition-Norman ; the east end and west door Early English ; the north chapel and south aisle Decorated ; and the south chapel, north aisle, tower and porch Perpendicular. Four of the north aisle windows contain excellent fifteenth century glass. There is a curious so-called "Lepers' Squint"¹ and five brasses. The alabaster tomb of Sir Anthony Browne is good, but not equal to that of his son at Easington.

There are two or three places to the west of Battle which may be conveniently visited from it. The most interesting of these is Ashburnham Park, which lies about four miles to the west and is reached through beautiful wooded country, very typical of the Hastings Sand district. Ashburnham, with the neighbouring Penhurst, was one of the great centres of the vanished iron industry, which for centuries absorbed the best energies of Sussex. The furnaces were fed with wood, and finally were unable to compete with the cheaper coal found near the iron in the north of England. The result was inevitable, but the struggle lasted long, and the last Sussex furnace, which was in Ashburnham itself, was only extinguished for good in 1828. The names "Ashburnham Furnace" and "Ashburnham Forge" remain to this day as evidence of the former state of things. Ashburnham Park is the seat of an ancient family, whose origin stretches far back into the mists of history, and to whom even the Normans appear comparatively newcomers. There is, in leed, a story that an Ashburnham defended Dover for Harold against William. The most celebrated member of the family, John Ashburnham, was a staunch Cavalier, a Groom of the Chambers

¹ Of course, I do not intend, by using the traditional name, to imply any theory on a very disputed question.

to Charles I., and accompanied him in his flight from Oxford. At the King's execution he was given his watch, the shirt and silk drawers the King was wearing, and the sheet which was thrown over his body. These precious relics are now kept in the house, but are not shown. In the will of Bertram Ashburnham, who died in 1743, it was directed that the watch and the shirt should be delivered "to the minister of the church at Ashburnham, to be deposited and kept among the plate and linen belonging to the said church, where I desire and direct" (the testator adds) "the same may remain for ever." Bertram, however, was a younger son, and it was contended afterwards that he had no right to alienate an heirloom belonging to the head of the family. Also there was some fear that such precious relics would not be safe in the parish church; indeed, it is stated that the watch-case was stolen. For these reasons they have been removed to the great house, but, as it is not open to visitors, the disappointing result is that no view of them is to be had. Doubtless the Earl is entirely within his legal rights, but perhaps a writer, though unconnected with the county, might without presumption suggest that an appeal *ad verecundiam* should be made to him so far to carry out the wishes of his ancestor Bertram as to allow visitors to inspect the relics on one day in each week. The house is modern, but used to contain a celebrated library, which was brought to the hammer in 1897. The park is large and beautiful, but the visitor must keep to the footpath. The church contains some tombs and memorials of the family, all of which, however, are later than 1665. The earliest of them is to John Ashburnham himself, who died in 1671. Penhurst Church, north of the park, is also of little interest.

East of Ashburnham Park are the beautiful grounds of Normanhurst, Lord Brassey's seat, which are shown on Tuesdays. The return to Battle may be through Ninfield and Catsfield, where the churches are uninteresting.

Our next ramble takes us still further northward to the valley of the Rother, which we reach in five or six miles at Robertsbridge, by the road passing through Battle. In a mile or two Whatlington is some little distance on our right, a village with a restored church, mainly Early English, but of little interest. About half-way to Robertsbridge the railway crosses the road, directly after which a turn to the left leads to Mountfield. Here is a small Norman and Early English church with a cylindrical font and a double squint. In Limekiln Wood in the parish is the Subwealden Boring, well known to all geologists. It was resolved upon at a meeting of the British Association at Brighton in 1872, the object being to ascertain the nature of the rocks under the surface of South-eastern England. Limekiln Wood was selected because in this part of the Weald alone the Purbeck beds rise to the surface amid the Hastings Sand. The result was disappointing, owing to the great thickness of the Kimeridge Clay (a rock which comes to the surface in Dorsetshire and in the Vale of the White Horse, Berkshire), which at this point proved to be nearly 1,500 feet thick out of the whole depth of 2,000 feet. An important discovery of gypsum, however, was made, resulting in the establishment of cement works. About three miles north of Mountfield the road reaches the Rother Valley.

The Rother differs from all the other Sussex streams in that its course is rather west to east than north to south. It runs in a valley entirely bounded by the

Hastings Sand region, with an irregular continuation of the Forest Ridge to the north and the Southern Forest Ridge to the south. The valley is broad and fair, but in its upper part the streamlet is quite insignificant. The only interesting part of the river, which part we are about to traverse, lies between Etchingham, where the addition of the little Dudwell makes the stream of a respectable size, and Bodiam Castle, below which it is a mere tidal canal.

Etchingham is the next station to Robertsbridge, and is a small village right down in the valley on the banks of the river. It is noted for its beautiful church, which is late Decorated—a great rarity in Sussex—and contains a fine series of remarkable windows. Equally fine are the brasses to the de Echyngam family, which are surpassed by none in the county. The font, sedilia, and screen are worth notice, also the traces of the moat which used to surround the churchyard. Across the river is Haremere Hall, once an old Tudor mansion, but now modernised, which at the end of the eighteenth century was the residence of Sir John Lade, companion of George IV. when Prince Regent. Readers of *Rodney Stone* will remember the exciting carriage-race between him and Tregellis on the Brighton to London road. He is there described as resembling a coachman (a profession he is said to have really adopted when evil days fell on him), and as having married the mistress of "Sixteen-string Jack," a noted highwayman, who had been recently hanged. The claims of this lady to assert herself in society seem sometimes to have led to disputes and scandal. George IV. was occasionally a guest at Etchingham, and in Chapter XVII. we shall hear of him as passing through the neighbouring Burwash on his road to and from Brighton.

Descending the river, we next reach Robertsbridge, obviously a corruption for Rother Bridge. Here the London road is carried over the Rother by six bridges, of which five are but little wanted save in flood-time. The road recalls the misadventures of Horace Walpole when journeying towards Hurstmonceaux, where we have already met him. He must, of course, be allowed to speak for himself.¹ "Here our woes increase. The roads grew bad beyond all badness, the night dark beyond all darkness, our guide frightened beyond all frightfulness. However, without being at all killed, we got up—or down—I forget which, it was so dark—a famous precipice called Silver Hill, and about ten at night arrived at a wretched village called Rotherbridge (*sic*). We had still six miles hither, but determined to stop, as it would be a pity to break our necks before we had seen all we intended. But alas! there was only one bed to be had; all the rest were inhabited by smugglers, whom the people of the house called mountebanks, and with one of whom the lady of the den told Mr. Chute he might lie. We did not at all take to this society, but, armed with links and lanthorns, set out again upon this impracticable journey. At two o'clock in the morning we got hither" (*i.e.*, Battle), "to a still worse inn, and that crammed with excise officers, one of whom had just shot a smuggler. However, as we were neutral parties, we have passed safely through both armies hitherto."

Silver Hill, the "precipice" referred to, is about 400 feet high, and is really the descent of the road from the Forest Ridge to the Rother valley. On his return journey in the daylight Horace Walpole appreciated it better. "It commands," he says, "a whole horizon of the richest blue prospect you ever saw."

¹ Letter to Richard Bentley, August 5, 1752. See Chapter XIV.

About a mile further down the valley, on the south side of the river, are the remains of Robertsbridge Abbey, a Cistercian foundation of the twelfth century. The ruins now form part of a farmhouse and its out-buildings. Under the farmhouse itself is a perfect vault, springing from a central pillar, and on the west side of the house is a pretty Early English arch, resting on slender shafts. There are also some ruined arches and the spring of some vaulting, which are built up with an oast-house, and between it and the farm some other featureless ruins, which were probably part of the chapel. The mention of an oast-house may remind us that we are in one of the hop districts of Sussex. Hops are cultivated here and there, but not so extensively as in Kent.

Very little is known of Robertsbridge Abbey, but there is a curious memorial of it in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, *i.e.*, a volume with the inscription, "This book belongs to St. Mary of Robertsbridge; whoever shall steal or sell it, let him be Anathema Maranatha." Underneath this is written, "I, John Bishop of Exeter, know not where the aforesaid house is; nor did I steal this book, but acquired it in a lawful way."

The Rother at this point shows rather more life than the ordinary Sussex stream. It can be crossed by a footbridge to Salehurst, which lies under Silver Hill. The church is remarkable for its splendid old tower, which stands up grandly. It is Early English, with the upper story Perpendicular. The church is mainly a rude type of Early English, fairly common in East Sussex. Its most remarkable feature is the font, which shows a salamander, represented as a serpentine animal crawling round the base. The salamander was fabled to be able to live in fire, so that it was taken as a type

of baptism "with the Holy Ghost and with fire." There are also in the church about half-a-dozen iron gravestones. These are fairly common in the churches of the neighbourhood. They are all of local manufacture, and recall the time when the Sussex ironworks flourished.

Two or three miles down the valley we reach Bodiam Castle. The routes to it from Salehurst are somewhat circuitous ; as, however, there is now a railway station at Bodiam, it is quite easy to visit the castle from Hastings. The present owner is Lord Curzon.

The name is derived from the de Bodiam family, who held the manor under the Earl of Eu, from the Conquest to 1250. After this the Wardeux family were lords from 1250 to 1370. When the male line of the family failed, the heiress married Sir Edward Dalyngrudge, who built the castle in 1386. Sir Edward has been sometimes called a hero of Crécy and Poitiers. It is very doubtful whether he deserves this honour, but he certainly took part in the less creditable plundering raids in France which were made in the latter years of Edward III. The only incident in the history of the castle worth recalling is its dismantling by Waller in the Great Civil War, its owner at the time, Sir Lewis Lewknor, being a strong Royalist. There had been no fighting here, however, and it seems that the building was leniently treated, as there is no breach in its outer circuit.

The castle is a highly satisfactory and picturesque ruin. It will at first excite surprise to see such solid towers in so low-lying a situation, instead of, as usual, crowning a hill. The principal defence was a wide and deep moat, which still survives, and, as it is kept full of sweet, clear water, with floating lilies and overhanging trees, it adds much to the attractions of the

place. The interior is approached by a causeway over the moat, on the site of the drawbridge. This first passes some ruined fragments of a barbican tower and then reaches the front gateway, which has grand machicolations and shows an original portcullis. Above are three shields with the arms of the earliest owners of the castle, the de Bodiam to the left, the Wardeux to the right, and the Dalyngrudge in the centre. The castle has four round towers at the four angles and four square towers in the centre of the sides, two of the latter forming the entrance and postern gateways, a shape somewhat recalling Hurstmonceux. Each of these eight towers has a circular staircase, of which six are perfect. Inside the buildings lie in ruins. The chapel, great hall, and kitchen may be easily made out; but the real interest of the ruin is in the outside views of it from the far side of the moat.

The course of the Rother is not worth tracing below this point. It becomes a sluggish tidal canal, and keeps near the Kent boundary nearly the whole way to its mouth near Rye, occasionally forming part of it.

The route to be taken on our return journey will depend upon whether we are going back to Hastings or on to Rye. If the former, the most direct route is nearly south by Sedlescombe, a pleasant village showing some traces of the ancient ironworks, including an old cinder-bed, and with an Early English and Perpendicular church of little account. But a much better, though somewhat longer route, is a little to the eastward, by Northiam, Brede, and Westfield.

To reach Northiam we have first to pass Ewhurst, where there is an interesting little church, whose tower shows all four styles. As we approach Northiam its Norman tower (crowned by one of the rare stone spires), into which later windows have been inserted,

rises grandly in front of us. The church has two brasses, but is otherwise of little interest. The great "lion" of the place is the oak-tree under which Queen Elizabeth dined during a progress in 1573, the fare being supplied by a Mr. Bishopp, who lived in the fine timber-built house just the other side of the road. After dining the Queen changed her shoes. The ones which she took off are still kept as relics at Brickwall, the ancestral seat of the Frewens, which is a little south of the village. It is a fine timber-built house, partly dating from the time of Queen Elizabeth, and may occasionally be inspected when the family are absent. Besides the Queen's shoes, it contains some good portraits. The founder of the family, Stephen Frewen, alderman of London, purchased the estate in 1566. His son became Rector of Northiam, and showed his Puritan views very decidedly by naming two of his sons Thankful and Accepted. Accepted, however, in spite of his name, became an active Royalist. He was in succession Chaplain to Charles I., President of Magdalen College, Oxford, and Dean of Gloucester, and in 1642 took a prominent part in securing the college plate at Oxford for the King. For this and for his general "malignancy" he was outlawed by Cromwell, who offered £1,000 to any one who would bring him in, dead or alive. Fortunately, however, for himself, he was described as *Stephen Frewen*, and so escaped. It may be that the Puritans had not realised that a Royalist could bear a name of such orthodox sound. After the Restoration he became Archbishop of York. The family still live in the house, and in modern times have built a mausoleum in the church.

Turning southward, and traversing a well-wooded and hilly country for between three and four miles, we reach Brede, a pleasant village set on a hill, which

falls steeply on the south side to the flat valley called the Brede Level, through which a sluggish stream of the same name flows to join the Rother at Rye. Here is Brede Place, now restored, one of the most delightful examples still surviving of a small Tudor manor-house. It is built of stone, with some brick additions, and forms a quaint, irregular pile, crowned by a cluster of ancient chimneys. Here was the seat of the Oxenbridges, a respectable family, one of whom has been curiously transformed in local legend into a child-eating ogre. According to the story he could only be killed with a wooden saw, with which the villagers, after first making him drunk, finally hacked him to pieces at a spot called Groaning Bridge, still pointed out. The identity of this monster is somewhat uncertain. The reputation is usually fastened on Sir Goddard Oxenbridge (died 1537), who built the brick portion of Brede Place, but Lower believes it was Robert Oxenbridge (died 1487). Memorials to both will be found in the church, where the Oxenbridge chantry was rebuilt by Sir Goddard in a strange flamboyant style, perhaps attributable to his importation of French workmen. Is it possible that his character has been blackened because he did not employ local talent? Robert has a brass, Sir Goddard a fine tomb, and there are other memorials of the family worth noticing. The church as a whole was originally Early English, but it has been largely changed to Perpendicular. There is a good font, and a poor-box with the date 1697 and the inscription "Sarve the Lord, remember the poor." What Dean Swift's cradle has to do with the church is not obvious.

After crossing the Brede Level we reach Westfield (four miles from Hastings), where there is a good Norman church, with some Early English parts.

The direct road from Northiam to Rye leads through the midst of the hop country, by the pleasant villages of Beckley, Peasemarsch, and Playden. Beckley has a well-restored church, with some good chestnuts in the churchyard. Peasemarsch has a little Transition-Norman church with a still earlier chancel arch, lying by itself in the midst of a park. East of the village a road diverges to the left to Iden, the traditional home of Alexander Iden, who slew Jack Cade. If the tradition which places his house at Motes is authentic, Iden, though he was Sheriff of Kent, must have been a Sussex squire. It is true, however, that the Kentish boundary is only one mile distant. The last village we pass is Playden, where the church is largely Norman, with some Transition features and Perpendicular additions. The circular windows in the clerestory (c. 1180) are a remarkable feature. The tomb of a Flemish brewer is here, with the inscription, "Hier ist begraven Cornelis Roetmanns—bidt voer de ziele" (pray for the soul). There are also a Decorated screen and a Perpendicular font which deserve attention.

Note on the Battle of Hastings.—The details of the battle have been contested recently with so much keenness, that it is difficult for an amateur, who wishes to avoid controversial points, to produce a narrative which shall be at once lucid and accurate. I have tried, while accepting many of the criticisms of Mr. J. H. Round, to reproduce the general spirit of Professor Freeman's narrative. The palisade question, however, about which there has raged a fight even fiercer than the one Freeman pictured, I have left alone (except, perhaps, by implication); and also I have omitted the difficult and disputed point of the disaster at the Fosse.

CHAPTER XVI

RYE AND WINCHELSEA

THE approach to Rye from the north was described in the last chapter. The most usual approach, however, is by road or rail from Hastings, in which case Winchelsea is first reached. The road leaves Hastings by the suburb of Ore, and at once climbs steeply till it reaches a height of nearly 500 feet under the shoulder of Fairlight Down. It then descends equally steeply, with a fine view in front characteristic of the Hastings Sand country, to a level of about 200 feet, on which it continues for some miles. Presently Icklesham is reached, which has one of the most charming churches in Sussex. The tall tower, which is vaulted inside, and the nave are Early Norman, but far more interesting is the fine Transition-Norman work in the chancel. Besides the arcades which divide the chancel from the aisles there are two graceful blind arcades with pointed arches, which run along the north and south walls of the aisles. The lancet windows seem somewhat later. The early geometrical windows, two lights carrying an unfoliated circle, resemble some we shall meet with in Rye church. There are two beautiful Decorated piscinæ. A little further the road drops to the marsh-land, from which soon afterwards Winchelsea on its hill rises in front.

Rich as Sussex is in antiquarian lore of all times, it has nothing more remarkable or more picturesque to show than these two ancient towns, linked together by so many ties during their strange eventful history, and yet in many ways so markedly dissimilar. The very situation suggests a theatre on which the rivals might work out their destiny, undisturbed by the rest of the world, and, oblivious of the passage of time, remain to this day frankly mediæval. The low sandstone hills, after forming the coast-line for some miles, here trend away inland, and bound, somewhat in the fashion of an amphitheatre, what was formerly an arm of the sea, but from which the waters have retreated, leaving a flat plain stretching eastward to the banks of the Rother. Here is virtually the end of the county, for beyond the river the wild and inhospitable Romney Marsh stretches far away into Kent. Close to the river is the conical hill on which Rye is built, and which its buildings entirely cover in pyramidal fashion, while facing it on the western side of the level ground is the flatter-topped hill which is the site of Winchelsea. Between these two towns there is half a league of green marsh-land, formerly a stretch of salt water, with the Tudor fortress of Camber Castle, built by Henry VIII., breaking the level about half-way, and the "not very practicable ditch" called the Military Canal running nearly straight from town to town, after which it traverses the whole of Romney Marsh. This canal was dug by Pitt to keep out Napoleon, and, though an expensive job, was found, as the author of the *Ingoldsby Legends* says, "to answer remarkably well. The French managed indeed to scramble over the Rhine and the Rhone, and other insignificant currents, but they never did, nor could, pass Mr. Pitt's Military Canal."

These objects, however, are quite modern when compared with Rye and Winchelsea themselves, which were important enough in Saxon times to be granted by Edward the Confessor to the monks of Fécamp, a gift subsequently resumed by Henry III. Though not among the five original Cinque Ports like Hastings, they were subsequently added to the list, and rapidly outstripped Hastings as naval stations. During the time of the Edwards they played an important part in maritime enterprise, especially Winchelsea, which may fairly be called the mediæval Portsmouth. Their importance drew upon them many attacks of the French, not undeserved, it must be confessed, by their numerous acts of piracy; and the constantly recurring fire and slaughter from this cause formed terrible interludes at times to their prosperity. Yet they rose again and again from their ashes, and vied with each other in worthily entertaining kings and queens. But at last the receding of the sea proved more fatal than the French, and the fame of both towns became a thing of the past.

The fate of Winchelsea, however, has been very different from that of Rye. In the time of the Edwards the former was far the most important naval station, and contributed twice as many ships as Rye when the nation had to be defended by sea. But when the sea retired Winchelsea was left without commerce or resources, and rapidly sank in population. The last public event connected with the town was the brave attempt to welcome Queen Elizabeth worthily during her progress in 1573, in the course of which we have already met with her at Northiam. Rye, on the contrary, was kept from such a fate by the navigable channel of the Rother, and its trade was never more flourishing than under the Commonwealth.

Even at the present day, when the passage is only navigable for small ships, a certain amount of trade is kept up with the harbour mouth by the aid of a branch railway. The place still exhibits active life, and the houses crowd thickly together; whereas Winchelsea is a "deserted village," where a house rises here and there amid vast open spaces. "Winchelsea is a town in a trance," says Coventry Patmore, "a sunny dream of centuries ago, but Rye is a bit of the Old World living on in happy ignorance of the New." No words could hit off the character of Rye better, but with regard to Winchelsea, John Wesley's reference to "that poor skeleton of ancient Winchelsea" is perhaps happier.

In mediæval times the history of Rye is mainly a record of disasters. Thus, in the long-continued quarrel with the French, we naturally hear but little of the occasions on which the Rye mariners sacked the coast towns of Normandy, or made French sailors walk the plank, but a great deal of those on which the French were successful in exacting vengeance. At first the town was without a defence. Then in Stephen's reign was built the Ypres Tower, the gaunt Norman citadel, serving at once for a look-out station and a refuge, which still gazes eastward from the low cliff rising above the Rother. Soon afterwards, Richard I. gave a charter, the original of which has been lately discovered, empowering the citizens to surround their city with walls. Of these original walls none now remain, but there are traces of those which were erected later, in the reign of Edward III. Of the three gates built at the same time, only one, the Land Gate, is still standing. These new defences were soon tested and found wanting, for in 1377 the French took the town and reduced it to ashes. A similar disaster

happened in 1448, in which all the old buildings but five perished. Another dreaded enemy was the pestilence, attributed to the reek of the marshes from which the sea was receding. No doubt the contagion was aggravated by the crowding of the houses and the narrowness of the streets, and it may be that, like the Fire of London, the conflagrations caused by the French were partly blessings in disguise.

A more peaceful French invasion occurred in Elizabeth's reign—the arrival of a swarm of Huguenots, rendered homeless by the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. A second crowd came over in the next century, when the Edict of Nantes was repealed. To these skilled workers doubtless much of the prosperity of the town is due.

Rye has also welcomed many royal visitors. When Queen Elizabeth was here in 1573, she drank of a well which is still pointed out. Charles II. also visited the town, and both George I. and George II., detained by stress of weather, were entertained by the mayor at a house in West Street. In the eighteenth century the descendants of the Cinque Port mariners gave themselves up heart and soul to smuggling. Thus, after John Wesley had preached here, he wrote as follows in his diary for November, 1773: "I found abundance of people willing to hear the good word, at Rye in particular, and they do many things gladly, but they will not part with the accursed thing—smuggling—so I fear, with regard to these, our labours will be in vain." Such a manly denunciation is worth remembering when we are inclined to say, with Charles Lamb, that "your smuggler is the only honest thief."

Rye has but two literary associations, but both are brilliant ones. In the Vicarage was born the eminent dramatic collaborateur, John Fletcher. Few now read

the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, and yet there is one well-read play, called *Henry VIII.*, which might be described as written by Fletcher and Shakespeare, for recent criticism has arrived at the strange conclusion that only the inferior parts of the play are by Shakespeare, while the finest and best known passages are Fletcher's. The other association, Thackeray's unfinished *Denis Duval*, is common to Rye and Winchelsea, and carefully describes the striking features and general life of both in the eighteenth century.

On the general picturesqueness and fascination of Rye, I prefer, instead of using my own words, to quote those of Louis Jennings in *Field Paths and Green Lanes*, a charming book to which I have done wrong in not referring to it more often. "One walks the streets almost in a dream, mediæval streets, round which Arthurian or other legends might cluster, but with difficulty to be thought of as the abode of men in 1877. We breathe the very air of the past in the antique streets. They ramble deviously up and down, hither and thither, roughly paved, with many an old gabled house here and there, and strange ruins and mouldering gates and towers. The people about the streets seem to be an anachronism in their modern dress. Nothing more recent than the Cavalier's cloak and hat and ruffles should be seen at Rye."

It is asserted that only five ancient buildings survived the fire of 1377. To two of these, the Land Gate and the Ypres Tower, reference has already been made. A third is the cruciform church, which is on the highest point, forming well the apex of the pyramidal form which the town assumes when viewed from outside. From the tradition that a ruined capital has been discovered with the date 1191 it has been inferred that this is the date of the foundation of

the church. The year would suit admirably the highly developed Transition-Norman columns and arches of the nave, but the transepts contain Norman work which is clearly much earlier. The massive central tower must also have been originally Norman, though it has been completely altered, both inside and out, and now shows Perpendicular features.¹ Many subsequent changes have been made, in particular the building of the two Early English chapels, which flank the chancel and retain some original windows—lancets on the north side, two-light windows with a plain circle above on the south. The later inserted windows are not worthy of the grandeur of the pile. At the east end are two massive flying buttresses, considered Perpendicular in style, though their tracery is somewhat of a Decorated character. Besides the transformation of the tower, another change in the Perpendicular period was the alteration of the chancel arcades, only one of the Early English piers being left (on the south-eastern side). Inside there are three objects deserving mention. First is the ancient clock, whose pendulum swings free in the church. This was long considered a gift of Queen Elizabeth, but the parish registers show that it was bought and paid for in 1560-2. The mahogany altar is also stated to be a gift of the same Queen "from the spoils of the Spanish Armada," but this tradition, though it cannot be refuted by documents, is probably no more authentic than the other. The third point of interest is the tomb of Alan Grebell, who was killed in 1742 by a "sanguinary butcher" named Breeds, afterwards hanged in chains. The murderer intended to kill the

¹ Was the original Norman tower burnt or destroyed in one of the disasters which came on the town? So far as I know, there is no record of any such accident.



RYE CHURCH

mayor, who oddly enough was named Lamb, but managed somehow to mistake his victim and kill Grebell, his brother-in-law, instead. The details bear a curious resemblance to the case of poor Oliver Proudfoote. Could Scott have heard this tragic story before writing *The Fair Maid of Perth* ?

The other two ancient houses are monastic. The Carmelite chapel, just south of the church, has a restored front and is now called the Stone House. On Conduit Hill are the remains of the chapel of an Augustinian monastery, which after passing through many base uses, and at last becoming barracks for the Salvation Army, was in 1906 rescued for the Church and made a Church House. It has been found impracticable to reopen the blocked windows, but their beautiful tracery, which is Late Decorated of a flamboyant character, may be seen from a garden to the south.

Near the monastery is Turkeycock Lane, the strange name of which is explained by a grotesque legend. One of the monks, who sang divinely, won by his singing the heart of a young girl, whose father's garden adjoined the monastery wall. The lovers' real names are veiled in the story under those of Cantator and Amanda. At length their passion reached such a height that they fled together, but were pursued and captured. The story ends tragically, the monk being buried alive and the girl soon dying of a broken heart. But here the grotesque element comes in. The doom of the guilty lovers was that their ghosts had still to meet in the well-known trysting-spot, but that when the monk attempted to sing to his love in the old fashion, he could make no sound but the gobbling of a turkey-cock. (I have taken this story from Mr. Saville's interesting *Ancient Rye*.)

The interest of Rye is still far from being exhausted. Another hour may be pleasantly spent in rambling through the streets and noticing the quaint old houses. At the old Flushing Inn there have been discovered remarkable paintings with the date 1547. These contain the *Magnificat* in English, written in black-letter type on scrolls upheld by cherubs, and on a ground-work covered with trees, birds, and beasts in different colours. In the High Street, just opposite the turn which leads to the church, is Pocock's Grammar School, a dark brick building of the seventeenth century, where Thackeray sent Denis Duval as pupil. If we pass up the street and turn to the left we reach West Street, where the timber-built house marked Number 8 is considered the oldest dwelling-house in Rye. Another turn right brings us to Mermaid Street. Here the most prominent object is the beautiful gabled and timber-built house called the Hospital. The Mermaid Inn some years ago became a private house, but it is now again a hostelry, as indeed it is only right that it should be, though it is a pity it has been renamed the Mermaid Hotel. It shows but little from the road, but is most charming inside, for it has several rooms with latticed windows and panelled and roofed with dark oak. The back-view is beautifully half-timbered, even more so than the Hospital. When I last saw it, there were as many as eight ladies sitting and sketching it. In fact, the town is so small and close-packed that visitors often overcrowd it, and motors have the air of being too big for the streets. If a motor got out of hand it might conceivably knock down half the town before its career was stopped.

Winchelsea has been even more grievously used than its rival, both by enemies and by the sea. The

present town, for all the must of antiquity that clings round it, is nothing more than New Winchelsea. The old town, formerly a Cinque Port and the leading harbour in the South of England, lies under the sea, about three miles to the south-east. In its palmy days it combined the functions of Portsmouth, Southampton, and Dover, and many noble passengers have landed here, including William I., in 1067, on his first return to England after the Conquest, and two of the knights who murdered Becket in 1172. In 1216 it was taken by Prince Louis of France, but the people of Rye came to the rescue and blockaded Louis in turn, until the arrival of a French squadron enabled him to take Rye as well. In the first half of the thirteenth century the town was at the height of its prosperity. The mariners seem to have abused their position by committing many acts of piracy and murder, and were very ineffectively controlled by the Warden of the Cinque Ports. But the era of disaster was now close at hand. In 1266 the town, having espoused the side of Simon de Montfort and remaining faithful to his memory after his death at Evesham, was stormed with great slaughter by Prince Edward. It appears, however, that the Prince intended to treat the town mildly, so far as the methods of warfare in that age allowed, but he sternly advised the seamen to drop their piracy. Before that time the attacks of the sea had also commenced. The town was situated on a level spit at the mouth of the harbour, and thus exposed to the violence of the waves. The first inundation was in 1236, but in 1250 occurred a more serious one, which demolished three hundred houses and some churches. In the next generation, in 1287, another great storm completed the ruin of the town, over which the waves have ever afterwards dashed. Its most illustrious

citizen was Archbishop Winchelsea, who opposed Edward I. in the matter of the "Confirmatio Cartarum."

On the destruction of Old Winchelsea, Edward I., himself Warden of the Cinque Ports, by no means disposed to acquiesce in the loss of the principal seaport in his kingdom, purchased and gave to the inhabitants the present site, which was then a promontory washed by the waves on all sides except the south-west, where the narrow isthmus was cut through by a deep trench or moat still to be traced. The King personally superintended the building of the town, and in 1297 nearly lost his life owing to his zeal. For just after the walls were completed he was riding along the flat top of one of them, when his horse took fright at a windmill, and leapt off the wall on the far side, on which a precipitous bank sloped directly to the sea. All who saw the accident thought the King was killed, but his horse most providentially kept its footing on the slippery incline, and Edward reappeared, riding unharmed through the newly-erected Strand Gate. Under the King's fostering care the new town soon became as prosperous as the old. In the reign of Edward III. it played a considerable part in English history. Troops often embarked here for the French wars, and in 1347 the town contributed a noble contingent of twenty-one ships to the siege of Calais. In 1350 the King, with the Black Prince, set out from here to intercept the Spanish fleet, and in the evening returned victorious, having taken and destroyed fourteen ships. A lively account of the action and a graphic picture of Winchelsea at that time have lately been written by Sir Conan Doyle in *Sir Nigel*. With the revival of prosperity the sailors had again resumed their piratical habits, and, in particular, had carried on for many years a sort of private war against the



STRAND GATE, WINCHELSEA

Yarmouth fishermen, which the authorities had been able to check very imperfectly. Indeed, men were beginning to ask themselves whether the necessities of defending the coast really involved the encouragement of such a nest of unscrupulous robbers. But a fresh period of disaster, followed by final ruin, was about to overtake the town. In 1359 the French landed, and sacked and burnt most of it. In 1377, after taking Rye, the French reappeared at Winchelsea, but were repulsed by the Abbot of Battle, who, when asked for ransom, boldly answered that "he saw no need to redeem that which was not lost." After trying unsuccessfully all day to take the town, the enemy retired. In 1380, however, they were more successful, and once again, in 1449, the town was sacked and burnt by them, on this occasion sharing the disaster of Rye. By this time the sea was growing shallow, and soon afterwards it receded altogether, leaving Winchelsea an inland town, with its occupation gone. For some years after 1760 the manufacture of crape and cambric flourished, and the town revived a little in prosperity, but presently the trade was removed to Norwich, and Winchelsea sank to the small village which it is to-day. It was a Parliamentary borough up till 1832, and lately retained its archaic corporation, consisting of a mayor and twelve jurats, the latter a strange title which also occurs at Pevensey.

The town, as built by Edward I., covered the whole of the flat hill-top, and was divided by intersecting streets into thirty-nine squares. Some of these at the north end are still inhabited, and indicate the original divisions, but many of the squares are merely green fields, and towards the south end the houses disappear altogether, until at last New Gate, which marks the limit of the walls in this direction, is left strangely

standing by itself without a house in sight. Beyond it may be noticed the position of the moat which formerly traversed the isthmus uniting the hill to the mainland. The bounding wall has entirely disappeared, but two other gates still remain. Strand Gate, already mentioned, leads eastward toward the old sea-coast. The striking view from just above this gate is thus described in *Denis Duval*: "A winding road leading down to one of the gates, the blue marsh-land, and yonder across the marsh Rye towers and gables, a great silver sea stretching beyond." Colours, however, vary with the season of the year. When I last saw the view in September sunshine, it was the sea which was blue, while the marsh-land was brownish-green. The gate itself is now beautifully draped in ivy. The other gate, Land Gate, is to the north. It is later than the others, dating from the reign of Henry V., and its position is said to indicate that the town was already growing smaller.

In the centre of the largest square, with an ample margin of green all round it, rises the church, more fortunate than its sister church of Rye, which is so closely penned by neighbouring buildings that a comprehensive view of it can hardly be obtained. If Winchelsea Church were a complete structure, it would be the noblest in Sussex, for it contains exquisite Decorated work of the best period, having been built about 1300, the date of the completion of Edward I.'s town. But unfortunately it is but a fragment, consisting of a chancel only. The nave has been destroyed, or even, as some authorities believe, never built; and the transepts exist only as picturesque ruins. All the internal details are good. The windows are filled with Kentish tracery, which represents the last stage of the Geometrical period, when some

attempt was made to vary the usual patterns, but when the idea of flowing tracery had not yet been evolved. The windows to the north and south are mostly original; those on the east are restorations. The clustered pillars are very effective, and there are two beautiful sets of sedilia, one covered with diaper work. But the main glory of the church rests on the exquisite Alard tombs, which are in style Decorated, but somewhat later than the main structure. There are five in all, with similar characteristics, but the two principal ones are to Gervase Alard, first Admiral of the Cinque Ports, and his grandson, Stephen Alard, also an admiral. Gervase's title is peculiar, and does not appear until his time. The Alards were a powerful family living at Old Winchelsea, and their migration to New Winchelsea helped largely to determine its success. It is melancholy that the splendid tombs now have to be protected by railings from the attentions of irreverent tourists. A more pleasing reflection is that the years of dirt and neglect which marred this fine church have now come to an end, and a vigorous and careful restoration has lately been set on foot.

Under the ash-tree to the west of the churchyard John Wesley preached his last open-air sermon (on October 7, 1790), many years after the time when he had reproved the people of Rye for smuggling. North-west of the church is another ancient building called the Gaol, formerly the Town Hall or Court House, now used as a reading-room.

Just south of the church is the Friars, a private house containing in its grounds the ruins of the old Franciscan monastery, to which the public is admitted on Mondays. All that remains is the chancel of the chapel. Very few features are traceable except the

chancel arch and the window-frames, from which the tracery has disappeared. At the east end five windows are arranged to form an apse, which is not very common in the Decorated period, to which the chapel belongs. The whole is ivy-covered and forms a picturesque view. Greater interest, perhaps, attaches to the Friars as the home of the brothers Weston, who were nominally country gentlemen, highly respected by their neighbours, but really a couple of desperate highwaymen, who presently expiated their misdeeds in the usual way at Tyburn. But all lovers of Thackeray will have met with these interesting rogues in the pages of *Denis Duval*. Indeed, all that gives life and character to the Rye and Winchelsea of the eighteenth century—the jurats, the highwaymen, the smugglers, the alarms of French invasion, Pocock's school, Wesley's preaching, and the industries of the refugee Huguenots and their descendants—may be found in the story which, had Thackeray lived to finish it, would have been one of the greatest of our historical romances.

Most of the villages near Rye and Winchelsea have been described already. A few words may be added about Udimore, which stands on the high ground beyond the Brede Level. Here Edward I. stayed when building Winchelsea in 1297, the occasion on which he so nearly lost his life. It was here, too, on the same occasion, when Edward was about to start on his Flemish expedition, that he received a petition from the barons and prelates refusing to accompany him unless he would confirm the charters. Edward for the moment refused, and sailed from Winchelsea without the barons, but he soon instructed his son, Prince Edward, to agree to the "Confirmatio Cartarum" in his name. It was from near Udimore also



THE FRIARS, WINCHELSEA

that Queen Philippa and her children watched the sea-fight between Edward III. and the Spaniards. The church is noticeable because of the legend connected with its foundation. Originally it was being built on the other side of the Brede Level, which at that time must have been a tidal swamp, but every night the materials were mysteriously carried to the north side, as some say, by a band of angels chanting the words "Over the mere! Over the mere!" Of this the name Udimore is said to be a corruption. This is the most beautiful of the legends of supernatural interference with church building which abound in East Sussex, and with three of which we have already met.

On the east side of the Rother there are two Sussex villages, East Guldeford and Broomhill, but they have nothing to show visitors.

CHAPTER XVII

THE SOUTHERN FOREST RIDGE

Brightling, Burwash, and Heathfield—The basin of the Upper Ouse—Cuckfield to Horsham

THE course of these rambles now turns away from the sea and the Downs to explore the northern part of the county, the historical interest of which is less high than that of the part already described. Yet many of the villages we shall pass will be worth lingering in, and the country of the Hastings Sand, over which most of our remaining journey lies, is always bright and pleasing, and occasionally highly picturesque. It is one of the upland parts of Sussex—not a regular upland such as the Downs, but a broad belt of sandy soil forming a constant succession of small hills, with deep hollows between them. At first the cyclist welcomes the change from a flatter country, but ere long he may weary of the perpetual switchback of the road; and when he has gone up half-a-dozen little hills in succession, and found much the same view from the top of all of them, chiefly varied by the amount of woodland which alternates with the cultivated fields, he may even venture to think the country monotonous. But where the sand is piled higher to form the main ridges, cultivation ceases, and the

character of the scenery improves. Here are the vast woodlands of fir, beech, birch, and oak, from which the Forest Ridge derives its name, interspersed in parts with still wilder open tracts of gorse and heather. These features are best seen on the main Forest Ridge, which traverses the northern part of the county. But some miles to the south of it lies a second and lower line of heights, which I have ventured to call the Southern Forest Ridge, much broken up in parts, and interspersed at times with quite low ground, yet distinctly traceable in the general line of the higher ground. Our course now lies more or less westward, along this Southern Ridge, till we reach Horsham, at which place we turn eastward again and finish our rambles by traversing the main Forest Ridge from west to east. In describing these routes the villages lying immediately north and south will also be included ; but it is not intended to be suggested that it will always be found convenient to visit them in the order in which they are referred to.

The Southern Ridge begins with Fairlight Down, nearly 500 feet high, which lies somewhat east of Hastings. After this it completely encloses Hastings to the north, and then becomes considerably lower, when it passes Battle, the celebrated battlefield being one of the lowest parts of the range. Westward of Battle, as we travel along the road leading to Brightling, the hills keep comparatively low, until Brightling Down rises before us, the highest point on the whole ridge (620 feet). Before reaching it we pass through the pleasant village, where there is a church, somewhat mixed in style, but picturesque from the variety of arches at different heights, which are specially effective when viewed from the side. Some of the windows are lancets, others good Decorated.

The Down is a charming hill, with thickly wooded sides and an open common on the top, the panorama view from which is perhaps the most extensive in East Sussex. All views looking south from the Forest Ridge are effective, because of the beautiful background supplied by the Downs. In this case, however, the Downs are somewhat on one side, while directly south is the blue sea of Pevensey Bay. It is interesting to remember in this connection that in 1805, when the French were expected to land every day, there was a beacon on Brightling Down ready to be lighted directly the French war-vessels were seen in the Bay. On the top where the beacon was placed stands a tall pillar known as Brightling Needle, and a conspicuous object from the country all round, and not far from it is a small observatory. The latter, and I believe also the former, were the work of "Jack" Fuller, a remarkable Sussex squire and member of Parliament. He sat for Sussex early in the nineteenth century, and sometimes furnished amusement to the House of Commons by his eccentric ways, particularly on the occasion when he swore at the Speaker. He was nevertheless a man of many solid qualities, a patron of both science and art, and it was he who commissioned Turner to make the well-known sketches of the neighbourhood. His pyramidal mausoleum is in Brightling churchyard.

Three miles to the north of Brightling is Burwash, standing on the parallel ridge, which diverges from the main one some distance to the west. In the valley between flows the little Dudwell, an important affluent of the Rother. This is the scene of Rudyard Kipling's *Puck of Pook's Hill*, a story full of Sussex life and colour, both of the present and the past. Pook's Hill itself will not be found on the map, but it is obviously

the lower slope of the hill south of the valley. Behind it the ground rises higher to the High Wood, in which might be found Dan and Una's *Volaterræ*, and still further south the top of the ridge is reached at Brightling Beacon, on which we have just stood, and which, according to the author, was in Saxon times called Brunanburgh, corrupted afterwards to Brown's Burgh. The two fords over the Dudwell mentioned in the story, with half a league between them, are naturally now bridged over. The higher, Wallingford, leads to Burwash Wheald; the lower, by Dudwell Mill, to Burwash proper. The children's mill lies between the two, but nearer the lower ford.

The houses of Burwash, with its continuations, Burwash Wheald and Burwash Common, line for some distance the summit ridge of the hill beyond, lying between the Dudwell and the Rother. The church has an Early Norman tower, sometimes considered Saxon. Inside there is a Perpendicular font showing the Pelham buckle, an Easter sepulchre, and an iron slab with an inscription, *Orate p. annema Fhone Colins*, considered the earliest existing specimen of Sussex ironwork. But Burwash will be best known as the home of the Rev. J. Coker Egerton, author of *Sussex Folks and Sussex Ways*. Many of his good stories have been so often repeated that they have become quite familiar, and some have been transferred to other parts of the country. Thus it would be easy to parallel from *Punch* the following excuse for idleness: "I'm a haymaker by trade, and my trade's very slack this Christmas-time," or for cèlibacy: "I don't seem to see the good of giving some woman half my victuals to get the other half cooked." As a counterblast to this last witticism may be set the confession of an aged Burwash husband, that a thousand pounds

"in" a wife was a great deal better than a thousand pounds "with" a wife. Mr. Egerton was often surprised at the wealth of proverbial philosophy among Sussex folk. When he quoted a proverb it was occasionally capped with a racy and unfamiliar one. For instance, when a growing lad, he modestly protested "Ill weeds grow apace," but was reassured by being told that "Good rye thrives high." Again, when he had said to a woman, "A rolling stone gathers no moss," she replied, "Yes, sir, and a sitting hen gets no feathers."

The following apologue on party politics, though prejudiced, shows caustic humour: "I be a miller, and I've got rats, and I keep cats, and one day I looks into a place under my mill, and there I sees cats and rats all feeding together out of one trough at my expense."

But besides these stories illustrating shrewdness and wit, it is fair to remember there are others, showing the characteristics which have unfairly gained the county the name "Silly Sussex." The best of these is that when an undertaker, conducting a funeral, asked a woman for the registrar's certificate of death, she replied, "Oh! sir, I put that in the box" (*i.e.*, the coffin), "I thought the poor soul might want it when he got to heaven." Another capital story of this kind is the local attempt at deriving the village name. "When the Romans landed in Pevensey Bay, they had with them a dog called 'Bur,' and after a time the dog got so bemired with the Sussex clay that he couldn't travel any longer, so they washed him, and the place where they washed him was called 'Burwash.'" Mr. Egerton is much pleased at the "cumulatively hypothetical" nature of this definition. Another good definition was made by a youth, when excluded from the belfry. "Haven't I as good a right there as anybody else?"

It's 'bell-free,' isn't it? and it's free to anybody to go up who likes."

Many of the stories illustrate the obstinacy which, as Mr. Egerton points out, has occasioned the witticism that the true Sussex crest is "a hog," with the motto, "We wun't be druv." The best of these relates to the sturdy bell-ringers who refused to ring for George IV. That monarch had already passed through the village once on his way to visit Sir John Lade at Etchingham. On his return the bells were not rung. The ringers' own account was, "They had rung for him when he came thro' the first time and he gave them no beer, so they weren't going to ring for him again, not likely!" It is to be hoped that these selections will send some readers to Mr. Egerton's book, which is crammed full of stories quite as good.

Returning to the Heathfield road, we now travel westward, keeping all the way on high ground, though a little south of the main ridge. Very soon, just south of the road, we pass the finely-situated village of Dalington. The church has a tower which shows the Pelham buckle and is crowned by one of the five ancient stone spires in the county. A little further the village of Warbleton lies nearly two miles to the south. This was the home of the ironmaster Richard Woodman, the principal sufferer in the Marian persecution at Lewes. At that time the loft of the tower is said to have been used as a refuge, though another version of the story makes it a prison. The church is noticeable for some Decorated windows and the magnificent brass to Dean Prestwich (d. 1436). More than a mile east of the village, at Rushlake Green, are the small remains of an ancient Priory, now incorporated with a farmhouse. In 1413, when Hastings Priory was in danger of being washed away by the sea—a fate which pre-

sently befell it—Sir John Pelham gave the monks this site, and buildings were erected on it. It seems very doubtful, however, to what extent the Priory was actually transferred here. One room in the farmhouse is said to have an indelible bloodstain on the floor and to be haunted by two skulls—a story which recalls a similar legend at Calgarth Hall, near Windermere. If any attempt is made to bury these skulls, dreadful noises are heard at night and the cattle sicken.

We can now pursue the road to Heathfield without further distraction. Half a mile before reaching it is Cade Street, named after Jack Cade, who was killed here on July 12, 1450, by Alexander Iden, a "squire of Kent"—an event now commemorated by a stone pillar. The stories of Cade's death differ materially. According to *Henry VI.*, Part 2 (attributed to Shakespeare), Cade invaded Iden's garden, and, when discovered, attacked Iden himself, who did not know who he was till he had slain him. The local version has it that Cade was playing bowls in the inn garden, when Iden recognised him and shot him with an arrow. The true story¹ is that Iden and his men had chased Cade from Kent and overtook him at this place. Cade was discovered hiding in a garden and taken prisoner, but only after a desperate struggle, in which he was so badly wounded that he died on his way to London, where Iden was carrying him in a cart. Iden's traditional home, as we have seen, was in Sussex, not Kent, and, in any case, has nothing to do with Cade's death. Whether he was Sheriff of Kent at the time, or was made so later for his success, is a much disputed point. At Cade Street the road forks, that to the left leading to Heathfield village

¹ See *Dictionary of Historical Biography*, s.v.



THE VALE OF HEATHFIELD
From an engraving after the picture by J. M. W. Turner

and the old church. In the village is held Cuckoo Fair, on April 14th, so called from a tradition that on that day an old woman first lets the cuckoo loose from a basket. Accordingly, "Hefful Cuckoo Fair" is considered in these parts of Sussex the first day of spring. Readers of *Puck of Pook's Hill* will remember that on the last page of the story the children are left singing the song of "Hefful Cuckoo Fair" to console them in November with thoughts of the next year's spring. The church has an Early English tower and spire, but is otherwise disappointing. The right turn keeps on the high ground to the summit of the ridge, and soon has Heathfield Park below it on the left. This wild and beautiful region is traversed by rivulets, which are the sources of the Cuckmere. The house was the residence of General Elliott, the celebrated defender of Gibraltar, who took his title of Lord Heathfield from this place. A successor of his has built the Gibraltar tower in his honour at the highest point of the park. The view from this is much lauded, but, in reality, quite as good views are gained from the road, which is here about 500 feet high. From a point above the road, and looking southward over the park, Turner drew his impressive sketch of the "Vale of Heathfield"; but it is hard to verify all the details. The road continues on high ground for some time, and soon reaches Cross-in-Hand, where there is a first-rate viewpoint, marked by two windmills on the top of the ridge. The view northwards is here almost as striking as that to the south. Before us is the broad valley of the upper Rother, with Mayfield on its strange detached hill beyond, and further off the high ground of the Forest Ridge. About two miles south of Cross-in-Hand is the village of Waldron, which has a restored church with a Perpendicular tower.

At this point our ridge, which has been practically continuous since Brightling, is again broken by lower ground, and the road descends rapidly past Possingworth House (built 1657) till it reaches Framfield. Here, in 1509, a fire destroyed the church, which was consequently rebuilt in Tudor style—somewhat a rarity in Sussex. Two miles further we descend lower to Uckfield, a convenient place at which to call a halt.

In the district which we have now reached, the irregularity of the Hastings Sand formation is very pronounced. The Southern Forest Ridge disappears altogether for some miles, and only reappears when we are close to Hayward's Heath. The main causes of this are doubtless the valleys formed by the Ouse and its principal tributary, the Iron Brook, which unite near Isfield, after flowing, one in a south-easterly, the other in a south-westerly direction. But these valleys are no clean-cut gorges, such as the Sussex rivers have made in the South Downs. Such hills as are visible from them are comparatively low and insignificant. Thus it requires some effort of the imagination to realise the agency of these small streams in helping to make such a break in the line of high ground. This fact is further disguised by the general up and down tendency so characteristic of the Hastings Sand.

Before, therefore, we regain our ridge at Hayward's Heath, we have to take a devious ramble to include a group of villages in very various situations, but all of which are connected by the fact that they lie in the basin of the Upper Ouse. The end of our last ramble brought us to Uckfield, a pleasant market-town lying among woods and hills beside the Iron Brook, and considerably enlarged since it was made a railway station, but with nothing to show the visitor

Its one lion, "The Rocks," is in private grounds, now closed to the public. The rocks are a group of the Hastings Sandstone which have been left exposed by denudation so as to present a steep cliff on one side. This peculiar formation, however, may be well seen in other places, especially near Tunbridge Wells. Uckfield was visited by Fanny Burney in 1779, but she "found nothing to record except two lines of a curious epitaph—

‘ A wife and eight little children had I,
And two at a birth who never did cry. ’

Tracing the valley upward from Uckfield, we next reach Buxted. Here we are in the centre of one of the Sussex hop-districts, though the visitor must not expect that extensive cultivation which in some parts of Kent gives the hop-country a peculiar landscape of its own. In itself Buxted is a small, unattractive place, though set in a beautiful neighbourhood; but its glory is the extensive and beautiful park, near the north end of which is a small ancient house with a hog carved over the door and the date 1581. This "Hog-house," as it is called, may remind us that there was a time when park and hop-gardens as yet were not, and when Buxted, instead of a placid agricultural village, was the home of a busy industry. In a word, we have reached another centre of the ancient Sussex ironworks. Indeed, Hog-house may be well called its Mecca, for here dwelt the family of Ralph Hogge, the ironfounder, who in 1543 cast the first cannon in one solid piece, all cannons up to that time having been hooped. In local tradition the Hogge family have got confused with the Huggetts, who also had a furnace in the neighbourhood, the site of which is

still pointed out, somewhat east of the park. This error is perpetuated in a well-known jingle—

" Master Huggett and his man John,
They did cast the first can-non."

A little south of the Hog-house is the church, also in the centre of the park. In the case of churches so placed I have usually found it necessary to be contented with admiring their picturesque situation, for they are almost invariably locked, and the key is probably a mile or so away in an uncertain direction. In the present instance the keys are at the Rectory, north of the park. In 1899, when I applied for them on a Saturday, I was told, if my memory is correct, that the rector had gone out riding with the keys in his pocket, but that I could see the church the next day, if I would come to service. This was somewhat discouraging, and I should gather from it that the inside of the church has been seen by few. This is to be regretted, for it contains two remarkable ancient brasses, one to J. de Lewes, 1330, perhaps the earliest in Sussex, and the other to Britellus Avenel, 1408. Over the porch is a female figure holding a churn, supposed to be a rebus of the name Allchorn. The nave is Early English. The chancel has some good Decorated windows, of which the eastern one is particularly noticeable. The mortuary chapel, south of the chancel, belonged to the Earls of Liverpool, who once lived in Buxted Park. The most distinguished of the family was many years Prime Minister under George III. There is a graceful shingled spire of the usual Sussex type, which often, as here, gives the suggestion that it is intended to mark the site of the church by rising above the thick trees.

About a mile westward is Maresfield, which also has a park to show. The cruciform church is of little interest. Two small windows, one Norman, the other Transition-Norman, are nearly the only indications of its ancient structure. On the north side is a restored wooden porch, with two stoups, one inside and one outside.

A winding road westward will now lead us to the interesting village of Fletching, lying on the banks of the Ouse. Here Simon de Montfort encamped the night before the battle of Lewes. The dense woods which then grew all around completely concealed his army, so that on the next morning he gained the Downs before the Royalists at Lewes were aware that he was so near. If, however, they were taken off their guard, it was due to their own negligence, for Simon's fruitless attempt at negotiation the day before must have informed them that he was in the neighbourhood. The woods have now largely disappeared, but the grand church, one of the largest in the county, stands much as it did in Simon's time, with its Early Norman tower, of the same type as those of Burwash and Icklesham, and a good deal of the Early English work which transformed the building about 1230. What part the lately rebuilt church took in the devotions of the Barons' army on the night before the battle we are not told. It may be that Gilbert de Clare, the young Earl of Gloucester, who was knighted by Simon on that occasion, watched his armour all night within its walls. Since then the main changes have been the insertion of some Geometrical windows, including the fine one at the east end, and also of some Perpendicular windows in the nave. In our time the well-meant liberality of Lord Sheffield, who spent £7,000 on its restoration, has unfortunately

obscured some of its features, but it still remains, with its noble plan and proportions, one of the most striking of the Sussex churches. It contains several interesting points. In the transepts are three lancet windows filled with old glass, which was discovered in the churchyard during the restoration. There is a good Early Perpendicular screen. In the nave is a brass to P. Devot, 1450, a local glover who took part in Cade's rebellion. In the south transept is an altar-tomb with brass about 1380, probably to a Dalyngrudge and his wife. In the north transept, beside some old helmets and gauntlets of the Neville family, there is the Sheffield mausoleum, in which is the tomb of Edward Gibbon. The beautiful Sheffield Park, the seat of Lord Sheffield, stretches on the west of the village to the banks of the Ouse. Here Gibbon was a frequent and welcome guest, and when he died in London in 1794, his friend, the first Lord Sheffield, not only acted as his literary executor, but conferred undying honour on the little village by the Ouse by burying the great historian in his own mausoleum.

If we ascend further up the left bank of the Ouse we shall find no more villages close to the river itself. But on the high ground at some distance, which drains to the river-valley, there are three places of some interest. The first of these is the pretty village of Horsted Keynes. It lies about a mile and a half from the Ouse itself, and is placed on a steep hill rising from a small tributary stream. The road to it from Fletching passes through the hamlet of Dane Hill, a name which suggests that the common may have been the scene of a fight between the Saxons and some marauding Northmen, but so far as I know there is no tradition on the subject. The church of Horsted Keynes is famous as the last resting-place of the saintly

Archbishop Leighton of Glasgow, whose last years were passed at the neighbouring timber-built house called Broadhurst. His body was placed in a chapel to the south of the church, which has disappeared, so that the Archbishop's grave is now under the open sky. Under the blocked arch which led into the chapel is a coat of arms belonging to the Leighton family. The original gravestone of the Archbishop has been fixed on the outside of the eastern chancel wall. The church was originally cruciform, but the north transept has vanished. The oldest part is the tower, which is plain Norman. The rest is nearly all Early English, simple and good, which, however, a recent restoration has made to look painfully new. On the top of the tower is set a tall and narrow shingled spire, which, though graceful, has a somewhat odd effect. Inside there is a small effigy of an unknown Crusader. Outside the north wall is a very fine piscina, belonging to a chapel in the destroyed north transept.

From Horsted Keynes it is about three miles west to Ardingly, but the roads will be found very complex and circuitous. Ardingly is situated just north of the point where the Ouse turns south-east, the direction of its upper course having been hitherto entirely eastward and lying between the two branches of the Forest Ridge. Down in the flat meadows near the stream, which is now quite small, are the buildings of St. Saviour's College, Ardingly, one of the Woodard schools, and forming part of a scheme described in Chapter VIII. The village is quite a mile further north, and situated on high ground, which is really the south slope of the main Forest Ridge. The church is one of the few in Sussex which are mainly Decorated, and shows good windows in the style. It contains a

Perpendicular screen, a little old glass, and some fine tombs, one to an unknown priest (under a Decorated canopy), another with brasses to Richard Wakehurst and his wife, and six brasses to the Colepeper family. Both the Wakehursts and Colepepers lived at Wakehurst Place ($1\frac{1}{2}$ miles north), which was built in 1590 and is the finest example of an Elizabethan building in all Sussex.

A very up and down road with several danger-boards leads eastward to Balcombe, where the London and Brighton railway is struck. The village is a grand centre for beautiful walks, since the forests of the Ridge stretch right down to it. The church, however, is rebuilt and uninteresting. We may now turn our steps southwards again. A little south of Balcombe the railway is carried by a fine viaduct over the Ouse valley, here a broad level tract from which the ground rises steeply on both sides. The insignificant brooklet to which the Ouse is now reduced seems absurdly small for so large a valley. Road and rail now lead to Hayward's Heath, but before reaching it we must turn eastward once more to Lindfield, a very picturesque village on the right bank of the river. The church has unfortunately been quite spoilt by restoration, but there is some compensation in a good timber-built house in the middle of the straggling street. There are several old houses in the neighbourhood, most of them now farms. About two miles beyond Lindfield we reach Hayward's Heath, where the Southern Forest Ridge may be said to recommence.

Hayward's Heath, which may be considered another convenient halting-place, is entirely modern, and owes its origin to the railway. It is in a breezy and pleasant neighbourhood and commands good views

of the Downs, but need detain us no further. But before leaving the Brighton railway we may briefly consider the next two stations to the south, which have not been mentioned. The first is the little village of Wivelsfield, which has a tiny church with bits of all styles. Somewhat south of it is Burgess Hill—a new town of the same type as Hayward's Heath. Rather more than four miles to the west of it is the village of Twineham, which has a quaint brick church, built in the sixteenth century and containing a Jacobean pulpit.

We are now ready to resume our ramble along the Southern Forest Ridge, which again becomes a definite line of high ground, about 300 feet high at Hayward's Heath, but rising to 400 feet at Cuckfield, at which height it continues more or less for three or four miles until it sinks about Lower Beeding to the level of the Wealden Clay. Nearly the whole of it is beautifully wooded, and the views continue fine the whole way.

In two miles we reach Cuckfield, a market town of some importance, pleasantly set on high ground amid abundant trees. Cuckfield Park is the *Rookwood* of Ainsworth's romance, which, it must be allowed, is a poor story enough, in spite of all its blood and thunder. The author has closely copied most of the details, but, with a sublime disregard for the characteristics of local scenery, has transferred the whole to Yorkshire. The ancient Elizabethan Hall might indeed belong to any part of the country, but the view from it, as described by Ainsworth, is pure Sussex. "Below the lawn there was another terrace, commanding a lovely view of park, water, and woodland. High-hanging woods waved in the foreground and an extensive sweep of flat champaign country stretched out to meet a line of blue,

hazy hills (clearly the Downs) bounding the distant horizon." Another striking feature of the description is the old avenue of lime-trees leading to the Hall, "one tree of which, larger than all the rest—a huge piece of timber with broad spreading branches—is in some mysterious manner connected with the family of Rookwood, and immediately previous to the death of one of that line, a branch is sure to be shed from the parent stem, prognosticating his doom." This lime avenue, tree and all, really exists at Cuckfield, and the legend concerning it is still locally believed. A correspondent has sent me quite a recent instance with names and dates.

Another local mansion which deserves mention is Ockenden Hall, formerly a residence of the Burrell family, who now live at Knepp Park. Its occupant in the seventeenth century, Timothy Burrell, has left a curious journal, illustrating in many ways the life of a Sussex squire of the period.¹ The church has a fine and far-seen Early English tower and spire, showing a coeval corbel-table. Three bays of the nave on the south are also Early English, the rest of the church Early Perpendicular. The east window is modern. There are two brasses, both apparently commemorating the same man, Henry Bowyer (1587), who owned Cuckfield Park. One of these brasses has on the same stone an inscription (1656) in memory of Sir Thomas Hendlie. Of more modern monuments there is one by Flaxman, but insignificant, and a better one by Westmacott. There are two stoups.

In Cuckfield village the road divides. The branch to the right keeps in the main to the summit of the ridge, but we will at present take the left road to Bolney, a pleasant little village near an open

¹ See *Sussex Archæological Collections*, vol. iii., for details.

common, just on the edge of the Hastings Sand, where it begins to rise up from the Wealden Clay, and whence spring some of the rills which unite to form the Adur. The church shows two ancient windows and an interesting south door, which are at least Early Norman, and may perhaps be even Saxon. Most of the rest of the structure has been rebuilt, but there is a Perpendicular tower. The village is on the main London and Brighton road, by travelling along which two miles north past Wykehurst Park the ridge road left at Cuckfield may be regained. This soon passes a little hamlet with the strange name of Warninglid, where Tennyson and his wife first set up house for a short time directly after their marriage in 1850. The house, we are told in his *Life*, was pleasant and sunny, commanding views over the South Downs. "But one night soon after their arrival a tremendous storm blew down part of the wall in their bedroom, and through the gap the wind raved and the water rushed. Then they learnt that their dining-room and bedroom had been a Roman Catholic chapel, that a baby was buried somewhere on the premises, and later, that one of a notorious gang of thieves and murderers known as 'The Cuckfield Gang' had lived in their very lodge. . . . Altogether" (we are not surprised to hear) "everything was so uncanny and uncomfortable that they took a speedy departure." So ended our poet's first attempt to make a home in Sussex; a later one, as we have already seen, was more successful.

After this the road begins to descend and the distinctive ridge formation disappears. Presently another road is struck at right angles, at which point there is a choice of routes to Horsham, either to the

right or the left. Both roads take us close to some of the finest examples of hammerponds, which may serve to remind us that we are again in one of the quondam iron-manufacturing districts. The so-called hammerponds are cases of streams artificially dammed up to give water-power. The two finest of these will be found on the north route by Coolhurst. But the more southerly route by Lower Beeding takes us close to Leonardslee, the seat of Sir E. G. Loder, where four of these ponds lie in one wooded ravine, and have been turned into a miniature lake-land. Sir Edmund has also made some interesting experiments in the acclimatisation of foreign animals. Readers of Rudyard Kipling may remember the astonishment of the rural policeman who, having ventured to interfere with a motor, was taken for an involuntary ride, and finally deposited here to stare at a herd of apparently wild kangaroos. A little after passing Lower Beeding we reach the turn to Nuthurst, which lies a little south of the road. The church is not of much interest, but about half a mile to the west, in Sedgwick Park, are the slight remains of Sedgwick Castle, mostly consisting of a double moat. It once belonged to the de Braose family, all whose strongholds have perished with an almost utter destruction.

After the Nuthurst turn, Horsham is reached in less than three miles, there being nothing more worth mention except a hammerpond on the right hand. It is worth noticing that the region just traversed is one of the great water-partings of Sussex, being situated close to the upper waters of three of the principal rivers. When we were descending from Warninglid, the source of the Ouse was in the valley on our right; the Lower Beeding hammerponds form one of the chief branches of the Adur; and the larger



VIEW OF A HAMMERPOND

hammerponds to the west drain into a stream which is one of the chief feeders of the Arun.¹

The frequent mention of hammerponds in the latter part of this chapter gives an opportunity of introducing yet one more of Mr. A. E. Knox's vivid scenes of birdlife. "These hammerponds," he says, "frequently abound with fish, and are usually drained at an interval of a certain number of years; carp, tench and eels are found in considerable numbers, and the decayed vegetation which has accumulated at the bottom—the result of the falling of the leaf from the overhanging wood during many successive seasons—is afterwards dug out, and in this state the ponds are suffered to remain for some time, before the water is allowed to return and the stock-fish re-introduced. Then indeed an ample and welcome feast is provided for the carrion crow, the bottom of the pond and the banks above being literally studded with a fresh-water mussel of which he is exceedingly fond. I have never observed so many carrion crows assembled together as on such occasions, and the banquet lasts for several days, until nothing remains but scattered fragments of the empty shells."

¹ The hammerpond of which an illustration is given is really much to the south, near Iping, but it was the one only which I could secure of this interesting Sussex feature.

CHAPTER XVIII

HORSHAM AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

Horsham—The Weald country to the west—North to Crawley

HORSHAM may be called the capital of North-western Sussex. It has always been an agricultural centre, and of late has become an important railway centre also, with the result of an increase in size and population, so that at present it is the eighth largest town in the county. Though a pleasant enough place, it is not particularly fortunate in situation, for it stands just at the junction of the Hastings Sand with the Wealden Clay, so that, although charming country may be easily reached from it, it has little attraction in itself. With history it has hardly any connection, save that in early times it came within the wide-reaching power of the de Braose family. The following incident also has a slight historical flavour. In 1698 there appeared in Sussex a handsome young fellow who averred that he was the Duke of Monmouth, who had not been really executed by James II. as currently reported. His good looks and ready tongue imposed on the simple Sussex yeomen and their wives; but when he came to Horsham he was proved to be the son of a Leicester innkeeper, and imprisoned as a rogue and a vagabond.

The story has some interest, as showing how little authentic information penetrated to the average country-side in the seventeenth century.¹

Of course, Horsham was once a parliamentary borough, returning two members, but its last member was taken away in 1885, since which time it has had to be content with being the titular head of an electoral district. Nor can it boast of many antiquities; indeed, most of the houses are new and ordinary-looking. From the meeting-point of the four principal streets, which is called Carfax, as at Oxford, there is only one direction in which the visitor is tempted to turn. This is southward towards the church, with a row of ancient-looking houses on the right and an avenue of chestnuts and lime-trees on the left. The large church has been very much rebuilt, but, since its charm depends mainly on its dignified proportions, it is worth a visit. When entering by the north door, notice a Norman door and window to the right. These, with the possible exception of some parts of the tower, are the only remains of the original building. The main structure is Early English, of which the principal features are the two long central arcades and the lancet windows in the clerestory above them. Some Perpendicular windows have been inserted, notably the great eastern window, and the splendid font is of the same date. There are also two chantries, of which that on the south (St. John the Baptist's) is Perpendicular, whereas Trinity chantry on the north shows few features and presents a somewhat difficult problem. It is, however, either Decorated or Perpendicular, probably the former. There are fine tombs to Thomas Lord Braose (died 1396) and Lord Hoo (died about 1453); and a headless brass to Thomas

¹ See *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, vol. xxiv.

Clark, 1411. The tower has the usual shingled spire. Near the church is the ancient Jacobean Grammar School, now used as a Board school. A good short walk is to Denne Park (south of the town), whence a view over St. Leonard's Forest can be obtained.

Horsham is the best centre for exploring the comparatively flat country of the Wealden Clay which lies west of it. This may be done in a day's ramble by the route to be described, which starts from and returns to Horsham. It does not pass any places of first-rate interest, but traverses a pleasantly undulating and well-wooded country, redeemed from tameness by the distant views of the Downs, Blackdown, and Leith Hill. We leave Horsham by the western road, but when it forks in about a mile, take the Arundel road to the left. Soon after this we cross the Arun, here quite a small stream. Where the river first receives its name it is hard to say. One principal feeder, as we saw in our last ramble, flows from the hammerponds south of St. Leonard's Forest, and runs close to Horsham. But another one, which we have already crossed, flows south through Warnham Pond, and perhaps may be considered the main source. After these streams join, the Arun takes a very circuitous western course before it finally decides that its real destination is to flow south. Soon after crossing it we diverge to the left for the wooded hamlet of Itchingfield. Here is a church with a Norman nave and chancel, a modern south aisle, and a curious wooden tower showing square windows with late Decorated tracery. The low side window has similar tracery. The lately erected new buildings of Christ's Hospital, the "Blue-coat" School, are in this parish, near the point where the railways join. They are of vivid red brick, which it may be hoped time will soon tone

down. Returning to the Arundel road, we join the old Roman road called Stane Street, which runs straight as an arrow across the county. After passing the hamlet of Five Oaks we reach Billingshurst, the most remarkable thing about which is its name. The usual derivation, that it means the wood where the Billings settled, a Saxon tribe who also gave their name to Billingsgate, though often scoffed at, seems to be true. Billing, the original ancestor of the tribe, is vouched for as a real person, and J. R. Green has used the name in his *Short History* to illustrate the origin of Saxon communities. "Harling abode by Harling," he says, "and Billing by Billing, and each 'wick,' or 'ham,' or 'stead' took its name from the kinsmen who lived together in it." The most ancient parts of the church are the tower and the south chancel aisle, which has two old lancet windows. The nave seems to be Perpendicular, and has a good ceiling of old oak.

Here we leave Stane Street and turn westward, and, after recrossing the Arun, which has at last determined to flow southward, we reach Wisborough Green, where there is a very interesting church, beautifully placed on a little hill. The west part of the nave, which projects beyond the aisles, is pure Norman. The rest of the nave, including the arcades and the chancel arch, is Transition-Norman; the chancel is good Early English. Early English lancet windows have been inserted in the nave aisles, and two Decorated windows in the south aisle. The tower walls are built inside the church. Note also a stoup and the remains of some frescoes, of which one represents the Crucifixion, another St. James introducing pilgrims to our Lord in heaven. Proceeding still further west we reach Kirdford. The Wealden country about here is very pleasant, the fineness of

the oak-trees being a characteristic feature. The church is a plain building, mainly showing Early English features with a Perpendicular tower, but containing two squints, a fine Decorated piscina, and some good woodwork. Kirdford parish is a most extensive one, for it stretches north for miles right to the Surrey frontier, and includes Plaistow, where there is a chapel-of-ease, and Shillinglee Park, close on the boundary. It is not, however, worth while to extend our ramble to include these places, so we retrace our steps nearly to Wisborough Green, but, before reaching it, take the north road for Loxwood. This is a village, close to the boundary, where the road crosses an important tributary to the Arun and the dry bed of the disused Wey and Arun canal. Here we turn right by the new church and proceed eastward about three miles to Rudgwick, a village standing on high ground, with splendid views south and west. The Wealden Clay seems to reach its highest point (not far from 300 feet) about this neighbourhood, close to the county boundary. The usual explanation of such hills on a clay soil is that a bed of gravel lies uppermost and prevents the clay from disintegrating. Whether this is actually the case here I have not been informed. The attractive situation of Rudgwick is apparently at present being recognised, and several new villas are being built. The church is remarkable for its good Geometrical windows, which, as I have stated before, are rare in Sussex. It also has Decorated piscina and aumbry and a font of the typical West Sussex pattern, and probably belonging to an earlier church.

The road back to Horsham starts east from the railway station. If when Stane Street is struck we turn south along it we reach Slinfold, a détour with

little to recommend it. There are some pleasant-looking old cottages and a new church, but retaining an old altar-tomb with recumbent female effigy. In any case we presently reach again the fork in the road from which we diverged at the beginning of our ramble. Just north of this point is Field Place, in the parish of Warnham, the birth-place of Sussex's most gifted son, Percy Bysshe Shelley, who was born here August 4, 1792. The house is a plain and ugly one, not old enough to look venerable, and few will care to make a pilgrimage to it. Here the poet's childhood was passed, yet scarcely any trace of Sussex influence is found in his poetry, and he has left no poem to recall any scene in his native county. The legendary dragons of St. Leonard's Forest (see next chapter) certainly seem to have impressed his childish imagination, but the stories lose with him their gruesomeness and terror, and the great old snake that he fabled to haunt the rambling garden of Field Place was kind and gentle, neither afraid of, nor an enemy to, man. More grotesque was the great tortoise which lived in Warnham Pond and which he fearfully imagined might utter some strange cry while he was sailing his toy boat, an amusement of which as a child he was very fond. Later on most of *Queen Mab* was written here, but the poet was as yet too busy wandering beyond the stars, and setting right all the wrongs of the world, to have any eye for the natural beauties around him. When, a little later, his rare and delicate power of natural description began to develop, he was among other scenes than those of Sussex.

Warnham village is now about a mile and a half to the north. To reach it we have to pass Warnham

Court, in the park adjoining which emus have been allowed to roam wild. A little north of the park is the modernised but picturesque church, which retains a Norman font very similar to that at Rudgwick and a Perpendicular screen. The pond is on the east side of another road which leads directly back to Horsham.

Before leaving the Wealden Clay there is another short ramble which may be made in a north-easterly direction. Start on the road leading to St. Leonard's Forest, but before reaching it turn northwards. There is no village until Rusper is reached, nearly five miles from Horsham. Here are some timber-built cottages and a rebuilt church, but retaining two interesting double brasses, the earlier dated 1375. Turning eastward, we soon reach Ifield, where the church was originally Early English, but the nave arcades are now Early Decorated (little characteristic and with few features), and most of the windows are Perpendicular. There are two fine altar-tombs to a knight and lady, conjectured to be Sir John de Ifield and his wife, who lived in the fourteenth century. The vestry screen, as a tablet records, was made out of the "county oak," which used to stand on the Surrey boundary, and was cut down in 1844. Another mile in a south-easterly direction and we reach Crawley, whose one long street is built on both sides of the London and Brighton road. It is pleasing in effect, in spite of the many new buildings, and some of the old timber-built houses survive. The church has an old font and two brasses, also the following inscription in gilt letters on a beam of the roof:—

"Man yn wele bewar : for warldly good maketh man blynde.
Bewar be for whate comyth be hinde."

Notice that though we have kept on the Wealden Clay the whole way, we are now well north of St. Leonard's Forest. But it is advisable to start our exploration of the forest from Horsham, so we will suppose that we return there by train from Crawley.

CHAPTER XIX

THE FOREST RIDGE

St. Leonard's Forest—Ashdown Forest and Crowborough—
Worth to East Grinstead and Tunbridge Wells

ONCE more the course of these rambles turns eastwards, to traverse the main Forest Ridge, which runs across the most northern part of the county. The characteristics of the Ridge are much the same as those of the Southern Ridge we have already traversed, only the heights are greater and the line of high ground less broken up, while the great forests cover almost the whole of the hills in thicker profusion. In the western part of the Ridge, which we are to traverse first, the forests are almost without a break, St. Leonard's Forest being at once continued by Tilgate and Worth Forests.

St. Leonard's Forest is the commencement of the Forest Ridge, and begins about a mile east of Horsham. It is of triangular shape and bounded by three roads, that from Horsham to Crawley on the north-west, the London and Brighton road on the east, and on the south the road passing Coolhurst Church and the hammerponds and then bending to Handcross. Formerly this great forest tract belonged to the de Braoses, but later it was divided up among several owners—an arrangement which has lasted to this day.

A few clearings, mostly for private estates, have been made in it, but the greater part still remains wild wood. When the ironworks were flourishing in the neighbourhood, to which state of things the hammer-ponds already referred to bear eloquent but silent witness, the furnaces were fed with timber got by cutting down the wood. The consumption was so enormous that a cry arose that the forests would not last and were sensibly disappearing. To this complaint an eloquent voice was given by Drayton, who, in a well-known passage in his *Polyolbion*, deploras the arrival of the iron age of greed and sets forth the lamentations of the nymphs and sylvans at losing their beloved woods. The result has been better than was anticipated, for new trees have grown up to replace the old and the forests are as extensive as ever.

The folklore of St. Leonard's Forest is fascinating and varied. Its connection with St. Leonard is explained by the story that a mighty dragon which lived in the forest was killed by the saint, but only after a hard struggle, in which he was seriously wounded. Wherever a drop of his blood fell upon the ground lilies of the valley sprang up, and have grown in the forest ever since. The principal lily-beds are marked in the map, well south of the main road, and gathering the lilies is a favourite spring amusement of Horsham folk. The name of the forest is more prosaically explained by a chapel of St. Leonard's which is said to have existed here, but has entirely disappeared. This was not, however, the last time the forest harboured mighty dragons, for in August, 1614, a "strange monstrous serpent" was said to be living in it and to have killed several persons. One may imagine that the occupation of wood-cutting somewhat languished when such a story was abroad.

Another legend is concerned with the supposed absence of nightingales from the forest. A hermit who dwelt here was interrupted in his devotions by their singing and solemnly cursed them, after which no nightingale has ever been able to enter the forest. Whether nightingales are or are not found in the forest seems a question on which authorities are divided, and it is perhaps a pity that Mr. A. E. Knox did not investigate this tradition.

A third legend is of a headless phantom, which has the unpleasant trick of springing up behind the belated horseman and riding with him to the forest boundary. His name is said to be Squire Poulett, but there is apparently no record to inform us what evil the squire had done or suffered when alive to earn so gruesome a destiny.

The visitor with plenty of time will doubtless prefer to explore the woods leisurely and on foot, but if he is content to keep to the high-road a very good notion of the forest may be obtained by traversing the road which runs along the main ridge from Horsham to Pease Pottage. The road ascends for two miles, and after passing the modern churches of Roffey and Colgate attains a level of 462 feet. Here the grounds of Holmbush are close on the left, and should be entered in order to ascend the Beacon Tower, which is about 100 feet high. From its summit, at a height of nearly 600 feet above sea-level, the best comprehensive view of the forest can be obtained. The effect is that of looking down into a sea of green, miles upon miles of continuous forest being in view. The beech and the fir are the prevalent trees, but to the eastward the oak begins largely to take their place. The distant view is splendid all round. To the west are Leith Hill, Hindhead, and Blackdown, and to the south a

comprehensive view of the whole chain of the Downs. From Colgate it is two miles through the forest along the ridge to the Brighton road, which is struck at the hamlet of Pease Pottage. At this point St. Leonard's Forest ends, but the break is merely nominal, for the woods are continued by Tilgate Forest on the far side of the road. Turning southward, we keep on high ground for a mile and a half, when we reach the very modern-looking Handcross, which is over 500 feet high and on the summit-level of the London and Brighton road. At this point our road parts into four branches, on all of which beautiful views are to be obtained. In front is a steep descent of well-known danger, which we will take in order to visit the village of Slaugham in the valley below. The church is restored and shows mainly Decorated features, but has an old font. It contains several sixteenth-century monuments and brasses to the powerful Covert family, whose mansion, Slaugham Place, was a little to the south. Such fragmentary remains of it as exist are Jacobean. In the main front, facing north, there are two arches, with panelling and coats-of-arms. To the east are more round arches on pillars, and to the west another arch and some mullioned windows. The circuit of the wall which surrounded the grounds is still traceable, with a moat outside it. The pond on the west may be fairly considered the source of the River Ouse. I am describing the place as I saw it some years ago, and it is quite possible that by now the ruins have been incorporated into some modern mansion, upon which the humble tourist will shrink from intruding.

As we have already explored the Ouse valley and the country to the south of it, we mount again to Handcross and turn right into the Balcombe road,

Here the scenery is perfectly delightful. After passing a glorious collection of old beech-trees, appropriately named High Beeches, we come to a first-rate viewpoint, where the country opens out to the southward. Hanging woods descend steeply to the upper Ouse valley, beyond which is one of the best views of the Southern Forest Ridge, with the bare line of the Downs rising in the far distance as a contrast. When the road forks we may avoid the turn to Balcombe, which we have already seen, and take the East Grinstead road, which passes above the Balcombe Tunnel, cut deep into the heart of the ridge and notorious for the murder of Mr. Gould by Lefroy in 1881. Presently the road is struck which crosses the ridge from Balcombe to Worth, and here we must again turn northward and descend through the heart of Worth Forest, where we may notice how gracefully the silver birch mingles with the other trees. At the far end of the slope the church is reached, which stands just clear of the continuous forest and is led up to by an old lych-gate and a pleasant avenue.

Worth Church is, indeed, not to be missed by any church-lover, for, although somewhat spoiled by later building and restoration, it contains by far the most interesting Saxon work in the county. The original Saxon ground-plan is traceable by four external peculiarities, which were clearly once continuous all round the church, though now they are somewhat intermittent. These are (1) long and short work in the corner quoins; (2) a double plinth or base, of which the lower stage projects beyond the upper; (3) a string-course half-way up, which once ran round the whole building; (4) pilasters, *i.e.*, vertical stone strips which connect the base with the string-course and run up the walls at intervals. Inside there are three rude

and massive arches, which lead into the chancel and transepts, and three still ruder arches blocked up in various parts of the walls. Also there are three very interesting windows, of a pattern found usually only in belfries, *i.e.*, two round lights divided by a central baluster. The height of these from the ground suggests that they may have been so placed for purposes of defence, with an eye to possible incursions of the Danes. Still plainer evidence of this seems given by the small round-headed window in the north transept, which has actually been made smaller than its original size—a change which fear of the Danes is known to have caused in other churches further north. All points so far mentioned are Saxon, but the present chancel is a restoration and most of the windows Decorated and Perpendicular insertions. Note the old font, the Elizabethan pulpit, and the stoup.

Worth is certainly the natural point for bringing to an end the description of the western part of the Forest Ridge. But if any visitor is tempted, as I hope some may be, to follow the steps of the above ramble in detail, it is well to add as a warning that Worth would be found an inhospitable place in which to stay the night. However, it is quite easy to return to Crawley or push on to East Grinstead. A tourist who took the latter course and rejoined the Forest Ridge on the next day at West Hoathly would lose hardly anything.

One important reason for selecting Worth as a halting-place in our present ramble is that it is near the parting of the ways. About two miles further east rises Turner's Hill, an eminence a little over 500 feet high, which is the source of the Medway. The little stream in its eastward course at once cuts a decided channel through the sandy soil, which very soon becomes a

well-marked and deep-set valley. This forms an effective separation between the main Forest Ridge, which runs south of it, and the ground to the north of it, which also consists of the Hastings Sandstone and keeps a high level, forming the most northerly strip of Sussex. When, therefore, we start eastward from Worth, in about a mile and a half we come to a fork, of which the right-hand road leads along the Forest Ridge, to be described in the present ramble, and the left-hand one past East Grinstead on to Tunbridge Wells, to which route I propose returning afterwards.

There is certainly one drawback to rambling through the beautiful region of St. Leonard's Forest, *i.e.*, that the woods usually pen the roads so closely that the distant views are few and far between. In the region about to be described, this disadvantage is much less, for, though there are still glorious woods, they are mainly on the side of the hills and leave the summit-level barer, so that fine and extended views are far more common than on the western part of the range.

Directly the turn just mentioned is passed, the road to the right passes close by Turner's Hill, and through the little hamlet of the same name, ascending all the way; then, keeping along the topmost level of the ridge, it reaches the windmill on Selsfield Common, more than 600 feet above sea-level. A mile further on this glorious upland road and we reach West Hoathly, also 600 feet high, the only ancient village which has been built on the very top of the Forest Ridge. The attractions of this beautiful place have hardly been adequately recognised as yet, otherwise one would expect it to be as thickly dotted about with villas as Crowborough is. The Forest Ridge is here about at its narrowest, so that there are beautiful views

in both directions, northward into the valley of the Medway, and southward over the rolling plain of the Weald to the distant Downs. The church has one of the most graceful shingled spires in Sussex, which, from its lofty position, is a conspicuous landmark far and wide. The building is almost entirely Early English. The windows all date from the thirteenth century, and, especially on the south side, form an interesting series, showing the development of Geometrical tracery in the two-light window. The church also contains a stoup, an old font, two good piscinæ, sedilia, and two iron grave-slabs. A little west of the village, in the private grounds of Rockhurst, is a singular formation of the Hastings Sandstone, called Great upon Little, a large rock being accurately poised on a very small one. It has been thought to be an ancient monument; but it is almost certainly caused by denudation. North of the village is an Elizabethan house called Gravetye.

After leaving the village the road along the ridge descends somewhat to a sort of narrow *col*, under which the railway from Lewes to East Grinstead tunnels; but soon after passing Tyes Cross it rises again to over 600 feet, a minimum height which it now keeps for several miles. About four miles east of West Hoathly we reach Wytch Cross, a junction of five roads, and one of the highest and most important points on the Forest Ridge. It has a crown of firs, whence there is a far-reaching prospect all round. To the north the road to East Grinstead gently slopes amid beautiful woods to the valley of the Medway. At this point the Forest Ridge changes its character for awhile, and broadens out into the extensive upland plateau of Ashdown Forest, about four miles long and three miles broad, and from 600 feet to 700 feet high.

This is perhaps the loneliest and breeziest part of South-east England, not excepting even the South Downs. The sides of the tableland are thickly wooded, but the flat summit is a mere wilderness of gorse, heather, and fern, with a few small fir-clumps here and there of grotesque shape, by which it is easy to recognise the forest from a distance. The absence of trees on this part of the ridge is striking, and some have supposed that the fate which Drayton dreaded for St. Leonard's Forest has actually overtaken Ashdown Forest, all the trees having been cut down to feed the iron furnaces. It is, however, far from certain that this is the case, for "forest" only means a piece of uncultivated land which was enclosed for the chase, and many parts of other forests—the New Forest, for instance—show the same phenomenon of large treeless spaces. For a vivid appreciation of this region I should like to quote some sentences from Richard Jefferies : "A thousand acres of purple heath, sloping southwards to the sea, deep valleys of dark heather, further slopes beyond of purple, more valleys of heather, and so on, mile after mile, till the heath-bells seem to end in the sunset. Round and beyond is the immense plain of the air—you feel how limitless the air is at this height, for there is nothing to measure it by. Past the Weald lie the South Downs, but they form no boundary; the plain of the air goes over them to the sea and space. This wild tract of Ashdown Forest bears much resemblance to Exmoor. You may walk or ride for hours and meet no one, and if black game were to start up it would not surprise you in the least."

Tourists who are on foot cannot do better than ramble straight across the moorland; but cyclists and others who must keep to the road will have to take the



ON THE SLOPES OF ASHDOWN FOREST

Hartfield road past Ashdown Park (the only estate on the higher part of the Forest), and descend considerably until the meeting of roads by Coleman's Hatch, where the turn to the right should be taken. After a descent to a brook there is a steep and laborious climb to the highest point of the forest, which is just over 700 feet. A little before reaching it the road from Hartfield joins ours on the left, and close to it, and not far from us, is perhaps the most remarkable of the fir-clumps so characteristic of the forest. It is called Gill's Lap, and is a favourite spot for picnics, surely rather from the beauty of its situation than from any special pleasure in eating one's sandwiches where a brutal murder is said to have been committed more than a century ago. The origin of the name has much exercised antiquarians. The local explanation is that a carter named Gill once upset a hay-cart here, on which the Earl of Dorset, who was passing by, remarked that "Gill's cart has lapped over." Since the Earls of Dorset really lived at the time close by in Buckhurst Park, the introduction of one of them is an amusing way of giving verisimilitude to an otherwise "bald and unconvincing narrative."

The highest point of the forest, as we have already seen, is just beyond the junction of roads. It is strange to realise here how near the habitations of men really are, considering the wildness and desolation of the plateau. From this point a track leads south-east to a gate, which admits us to the private grounds of Crowborough Warren, the shortest way to Crowborough. Close by is a point named King's Standing—a name which may serve to remind us that Ashdown Forest was once a Royal chase. Here a king, vaguely stated to have been "one of the Edwards," is said to have stood and watched the

stag-hunting. Our road through the Warren descends steeply beside a wood, and then ascends again, the scenery being lovely the whole way, till we reach the top of Crowborough itself (792 feet), the highest point on the Forest Ridge. Just where we emerge into the road, the top is quite close, and is marked by Beacon Cottage, with the Abergavenny arms on it. A little down the hill an old black windmill has been turned into a sort of beacon ; but the real beacon was in the field opposite Beacon Cottage, where the site is now marked by a stone slab let into the turf. The top is distinctly disappointing. It is quite flat, and trees interfere much with the view. The view south, indeed, can only be got by descending rather more than a quarter of a mile on the road past the Observatory to Crowborough Common. This is still a fine open space, though it is beginning to be encroached upon by new houses. The hill as a whole is shapeless and without beauty. The village of Crowborough, which lies on the north side of it, seems from the date of the church (1744) to have been built in the middle of the eighteenth century. New houses are now being dotted about over the whole of the hill—a development which does not tend to picturesqueness. In fact, though the west side of the hill is very beautiful, such attractions as the east side once possessed are rapidly disappearing. A long and dreary descent of about two miles brings us to the railway, whence Tunbridge Wells is easily reached by train.

The most distinguished visitor to Crowborough, though at the time Crowborough knew but little about him, was Richard Jefferies, who for part of 1886 dwelt in a small house, called the Downs, on the road leading from Crowborough Cross to Withyham. The shadow of the end already brooded over him, for he had little

more than one year to live—a year saddened by illness and privation. The note of pathetic melancholy is prominent in much that he wrote here, especially in “Hours of Spring,” written towards the end of the hard and lingering winter of 1885–86, in which he complains that his feebly-beating heart and trickling pulse confine him indoors when he would be abroad watching the signs of coming spring. How can the lark know without him that it is his hour to sing? how can the leaves and flowers manage without him? “For they were so much to me, I had come to feel that I was as much in return to them. The old, old error. I love the earth, therefore the earth loves me—I am her child—I am man, the favoured of all creatures. . . . I thought myself so much to the earliest leaf and the first meadow-orchis—so important that I should note the first zee-zee of the tit-lark—that I should pronounce it summer because the oats were now green. I must not miss a day or an hour in the fields, lest something should escape me. But to-day I have to listen to the lark’s song—not out of doors with him, but through the window-pane, and the bullfinch carries the rootlet fibre to his nest without me. They manage without me very well; they know their times and seasons, and I am no more than the least of the empty shells that strewed the sward of the hill. Nature sets no value on life, neither on mine, nor of the larks that sang years ago. The earth is all in all to me, but I am nothing to the earth: it is bitter to know this before you are dead.” This intensely sad passage is from the last essay which Jefferies’s hand ever wrote. It is true that he dictated others, and when the warm weather at last came and he was able to go abroad again and see one more summer, something of the old rapturous joy reappears; as, for instance, in the essay

on Buckhurst Park from which I have already quoted in this chapter.

Mr. Boys Firmin, from whose interesting book on Crowborough I have already borrowed more than once, shows that the greatest interest attaches to the period when as yet there was no town, and the district was sparsely inhabited by poachers, horse-stealers, smugglers, and charcoal-burners, so wild and lawless that "forester" became almost a synonym for rogue and vagabond. In such a community all sorts of strange and improbable stories naturally would take root and flourish, so much so that in Crowborough belief in ghosts, witches, and apparitions of evil spirits has hardly died out even at the present day. Of the remarkable series of tales which Mr. Firmin tells I venture to reproduce two or three of the most striking. One I have already quoted in Chapter VII. Ghosts who point out hidden treasure are found pretty often in other localities, but more racy of the soil is the smuggler whose head was shot off in an encounter with the revenue officers, and whose headless ghost runs about the hill with a lantern, vainly searching for the place where he had hidden his kegs of spirits. A still odder ghost takes the form of a bag of soot, and pursues any luckless wight who ventures on its beat ! Of the witch stories one of the best is that of Dame Garson, who, in the form of a hare, was once chased by a pack of hounds, but leapt safely through the window of her cottage, from which a voice was heard, "Ah, my boys, you ain't got me yet !" This was told to the narrator as a true story. "It's no use," said his informant, "telling what's not true. Why, I be there myself and see it. It's quite true. The hare was Dame Garson herself." Another good story was of a bewitched churn, in which the butter would not come

until a hot poker was put into it. A certain Dame Neve was discovered directly afterwards with a burn on her leg, and so was convicted of being the witch who had caused the mischief. Mr. Firmin found several persons who believed in witches. He was referred to the Witch of Endor, and solemnly informed that a "witch-spirit" could not die, but was transmitted from mother to daughter, of which an authentic instance was told him, only dating back five-and-twenty years.

Crowborough is the end of the Forest Ridge, strictly so called, but the ground rises again eastward on the far side of the valley where the railway runs. The high ground, however, now broadens out into an extensive plateau; but its southern line can be traced along the left bank of the infant Rother, by Rotherfield, Wadhurst, and Ticehurst to Silver Hill. These places, however, will be conveniently visited from our last centre, Tunbridge Wells.

Starting again from Worth and taking the left-hand road at the fork, we reach East Grinstead by pretty much the same route as the railway starting from Three Bridges station, except that the road is a good bit more circuitous. Two railway stations are passed on the way, Rowfant and Grange Road, but there are hardly any centres of population connected with them, only country houses and villas, mostly lately built. The country is charming and beautifully wooded, but there is nothing to comment on until the tall tower of East Grinstead is seen rising ahead, and presently we make our way into the most northerly town in Sussex.

East Grinstead is very fortunate in its position, for it stands on high ground, falling steeply southwards to the valley of the infant Medway, beyond which rise the dense woods of the Forest Ridge, on the lower slopes of Ashdown Forest. It has of late years increased

much in size and prosperity, partly, no doubt, from the many villas and residences which have been built in the neighbourhood, partly from its fuller recognition as a good tourist centre. The result has been partly to spoil its ancient picturesqueness, for some of the old timber-built houses have been lately done up afresh, and the few that remain unspoiled seem out of place among so many buildings of an aggressive and prosperous newness. The far-seen tower of the church loses its attractiveness on a closer acquaintance, for it only dates from 1785, when the old tower fell. The church, Perpendicular in style, is large and spacious, but practically dates from the restoration in 1874. It contains brasses of Catherine, daughter of Lord Scales (1505), and her two husbands, and an iron slab to Anne Barclay (1570).

But the principal antiquarian interest of the town centres in Sackville College, a most delightful almshouse, founded by the second Earl of Dorset, whose arms are over the principal doorway and also in the hall. Beneath is the date 1619, in which year the buildings were probably finished. The hall and the chapel should be seen, but the effect of the whole mainly depends upon the principal quadrangle, which is approached by a charming porch. The walls are mostly ivy-clad, and show four old doorways, four large mullioned windows and several small ones. A lantern over the central doorway is pleasing, and also a quaint old well in the corner of the greensward. In general arrangements the quadrangle somewhat resembles that of Jesus Hospital at Bray. A comprehensive restoration was carried out by the architect Butterfield at the time when Dr. Neale, the well-known ecclesiologist and translator of hymns, was warden of the college. Dr. Neale's researches were at the time

honoured more by foreign students than at home, for he held no preferment in the English Church, and was warden here for twenty years at the stipend of less than £30 a year. During that period he founded the nursing sisterhood of St. Margaret, who were first placed at Rotherfield, but afterwards brought to East Grinstead. He was unrivalled as a translator of Latin and Greek hymns, and his industry and versatility may be seen from the fact that in the first edition of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (i.e., reckoning without the appendix), one-eighth of the hymns are his work, either as originals or translations. He was equally good at translating English hymns into Latin. There is a story that he once handed to Keble what was apparently a Latin prototype of one of the poet's own hymns, with the remark, "Why, Keble, I thought you told me that the *Christian Year* was entirely original!" Keble was utterly puzzled until Neale explained it was a version he had just written himself. A more serious story of Neale states that when he was crossing the college quadrangle by night the ghost of a lady friend, who had just died, appeared to him, and implored him to save her husband from committing a great crime. Neale went to the husband, convinced him, by describing the apparition, that it was his wife, and turned him from the felony he had intended.

To reach Hartfield, the next village to be visited, there is a choice of routes. The finer and breezier, though somewhat longer, way is to take the upper road, which runs very close to the county boundary. First we descend a little by a fascinating lane, sunk deep between two yellow-red walls of the sandstone rock and almost overgrown with trees at the top. Presently we pass a new church, which is almost opposite the boundary line between Surrey and Kent. A little

further Holtze Common is reached, almost the most northerly point of Sussex, which slopes northward to the Kentish boundary, with fine views in both directions. Soon after this a cross-road is struck, which takes us south to the Medway valley at Hartfield itself. In front is a view of Crowborough which is more attractive than its aspect from the south side. About half-way to Hartfield we pass on the right Bolebrook, an Elizabethan manor-house, built of brick, with fine gables and turreted gateway.

The shorter route descends at once to the Medway valley at Forest Row, a village which is growing up in a most beautiful situation, surrounded by sloping hill-sides covered with woods. About half a mile up the river are the ruins of an old Jacobean house called Brambletye. In 1683 the owner, Sir James Richards, fell under suspicion of treason. The house was searched in his absence, on hearing of which Sir James, instead of returning home, fled at once to Spain. The house fell into ruins, and now but little remains. There are three large ivy-clad fragments, showing mullioned windows, of which the central fragment was obviously the front gateway, and crowned with a tower. There are also traces of an outer wall and moat.

The road down the Medway, instead of keeping close to the river, runs up the slopes of Ashdown Forest, nearly as high as Coleman's Hatch, which we have already passed, and then descends to the valley at Hartfield. Here the spacious church is late Decorated and Perpendicular in style, but of little interest. The old lych-gate has a timber-built house attached to it, dated 1520. A mile further down the valley we reach Withyham, a far more interesting place. South of the village is Buckhurst Park, for long the mansion

of the Sackvilles, who were first Earls and then Dukes of Dorset. Of the ancient mansion, Buckhurst House, nothing remains but a solitary gate-tower, now in a farmyard. This is Perpendicular in style, and shows a small turret at one corner. It is supposed that part of the stone of the ancient house was used as material for building Sackville College in East Grinstead. The present owner, Lord De la Warr, who claims descent both from the Sackvilles and the Wests (the lords of Halnaker and Offington), lives in a modern house in another part of the park. Many illustrious members of the family lie buried in the Dorset chapel in the church, and several monuments are very beautiful. The kneeling figures of the fifth Earl and Lady Dorset mourning for their dead son, whose effigy lies between them, form a pathetic group which strongly affects the imagination. In the vault below many other Dorsets lie buried, in particular Pope's Earl of Dorset, who died in 1705. Pope's epitaph on him, however, will not be found, though its title in Pope's collected works declares that it is "in the church of Withyam in Sussex." The church was struck by lightning in 1663, and entirely burnt with the exception of the Perpendicular tower. Some of the stones which were used again in the rebuilding still show a redness due to the fire. The font also dates from the same period. Some fragments of ancient glass were collected and carefully preserved.

In the village there is a beautiful timber-built farm, named Duckings. It was either this house, as Mr. E. V. Lucas thinks, or more probably, as it seems to me, Bingley's Farm at Lye Green, a little south-east of Buckhurst Park, which Richard Jefferies praises so highly in an essay from which I have already quoted,¹

¹ "Buckhurst Park" (*Fields and Hedgerows*).

comparing it advantageously with another more celebrated house at Mayfield, to which we shall make our way in the course of our next ramble. "At the edge of the park," he begins, "stands an old farmhouse of timber and red tiles, with red oast-house beside it, built with those gables which our ancestors seemed to think made such excellent rooms within." The whole passage, with its characteristic tirade against modern building, is very well worth reading. Before leaving Buckhurst it may be as well to give some account of the interesting attempt to revive the Sussex iron trade which is now in progress on Lord De la Warr's estate. When the last Sussex furnace was closed at Ashburnham, in 1828, the failure was due to the inability of wood fuel to compete with the cheaper coal of the North. But since that time the cost of transport has been marvellously diminished, and, considering that iron is brought even from as far off as South Africa for smelting in England, the question has been naturally raised whether the old ironworks of Sussex might not be advantageously resuscitated. A practical answer has now been supplied by Lord De la Warr. When building a bungalow in 1907 he came across such decided indications of the presence of iron and coal that he invited a committee of North-country iron experts to examine his whole estate. The result was that iron-ore of excellent quality was found just below the surface in all parts of it. Accordingly, a syndicate of ironmasters has been formed, who, for the last two years, have been getting out large quantities of raw material and shipping it at Newhaven. Furnaces are now to be erected for calcining the ore, and thus decreasing the cost of freight. There seems also a probability that coal may be found not far from the

iron, in which case blast furnaces will, in all likelihood, be started again in Sussex. This possible revival of an ancient industry is a fascinating subject, but it is melancholy to think of the ruin which, in a few years, may fall upon the scenery of Ashdown Forest and of the lovely valley of the Upper Medway.¹

Shortly after leaving Withyham the road passes with the Medway into Kent at Groombridge Junction, and in about three more miles reaches Tunbridge Wells.

¹ The above passage is left as written in 1906.

CHAPTER XX

TUNBRIDGE WELLS AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

Tunbridge Wells—Rotherfield, Mayfield, and Frant—Bayham Abbey and Scotney Castle

TUNBRIDGE WELLS, although a Kentish town, has always to be included by a writer on Sussex, first, because it is the natural centre for the interesting parts of the county which lie to the south of it; secondly, because it is built on a highly characteristic part of the Hastings Sand, so prominent in North Sussex; and thirdly, because until quite recently it really *was* partly in Sussex. Indeed, it is quite probable that many inhabitants of the town are still unconscious that any change has been made, and continue to inform their guests how the county boundary runs along the Pantiles and across the church of Charles the Martyr. This was true until 1894, when the Government drew the boundary-line between Sussex and Kent well south of Tunbridge Wells, thus transferring the southern part, Broadwater Down, to Kent "for administrative purposes." Oddly enough, however, this parish still partly belongs to Sussex, i.e. for ecclesiastical, electoral and rating purposes.

The story of the discovery of the wells, and the consequent growth of the popular watering-place, is a twice-told tale, but can hardly be omitted. At the

beginning of the seventeenth century the site of the future town was all bare down and uncultivated forest, with a single cottage built on it. In 1606 Dudley, Lord North, who had been a guest of the Duke of Abergavenny at Eridge Park, was returning to London, when he was surprised to see a spring "which bare on its surface a shining scum, and left in its course down a neighbouring brook a ruddy ochreous track." Had he been better acquainted with Sussex, he might have left the phenomenon unheeded, for the same can be seen near Battle, and, indeed, in many places in Sussex where the soil is impregnated with iron. But, as it was, he stopped his travelling carriage, filled a bottle with the water, and carried it to his London physician, who at once declared it highly medicinal. After this, taking the waters soon became fashionable, but, though the wells before long had Royal patronage, there were for a long time no houses on the site save the one cottage. When in 1630 Queen Henrietta Maria came here to drink the waters, she encamped on Bishop's Down, some distance south-west of the Wells. Several Puritans also were attracted to the springs by their healing properties, but they settled further off on Rusthall Common, apart from the godless cavaliers. How the town sprang up in Charles II.'s reign the oft-quoted passage from Macaulay's celebrated third chapter must tell. "When the Court, soon after the Restoration, visited Tunbridge Wells, there was no town; but, within a mile of the spring, rustic cottages, somewhat cleaner and neater than the ordinary cottages of that time, were scattered over the heath. Some of these cabins were movable, and were carried on sledges from one part of the common to another. To these huts men of fashion, wearied with

the din and smoke of London, sometimes came in the summer to breathe fresh air, and to catch a glimpse of rural life. During the season a kind of daily fair was held near the fountain. The wives and daughters of the Kentish farmers came from the neighbouring villages with cream, cherries, wheatears, and quails. To chaffer with them, to flirt with them, to praise their straw hats and tight heels, was a refreshing pastime to voluptuaries sick of the airs of actresses and maids of honour. Milliners, toymen and jewellers came down from London, and opened a bazaar under the trees. In one booth the politician might find his coffee and the *London Gazette*; in another were gamblers playing deep at basset; and, on fine evenings, the fiddles were in attendance, and there were morris dances on the elastic turf of the bowling-green. In 1685 a subscription had just been raised among those who frequented the Wells for building a church, which the Tories, who then domineered everywhere, insisted on dedicating to Saint Charles the Martyr."

The church is quite unlike other churches, being built of brick, with a white painted belfry, and ornamented within in Renaissance style, but it is quaint and pleasant, and in harmony with its surroundings.

South of it are the Pantiles, the old promenade, consisting of a raised pavement, bordered by lime-trees on one side and a line of shops on the other. Though none of the houses are old, the general effect is delightful. Some attempt was made last century to rechristen the spot the Parade, but the good sense of the town has returned to the historical name. South of the Pantiles is the Pump Room, where the water is dispensed by attendants called dippers. The original well is called the Queen's Well, in honour of Queen

Anne, who gave the bason and also contributed to the laying of the Pantiles. This walk was highly fashionable in the eighteenth century, and many celebrated men have trodden it. In chapter xxvi. of *The Virginians*, Thackeray brings together on the Pantiles Dr. Johnson, Richardson, Lord Chesterfield, and Bishop Gilbert. At that time the Wells seem to have been as amusing as Bath, a reputation they have now lost. Indeed, it almost looks as if the Puritan element, which, as we have seen, was there from the first, had finally become dominant. Many names in the town suggest a Puritan origin, and it is said that these are due to a fancied resemblance between the hills of Tunbridge Wells and the site of Jerusalem. Such names are Mount Zion, Mount Ephraim, and Calverly Park, the last of which is certainly a corruption of Calvary, though some derive it from *culver*, a dove.

In the neighbourhood of the town the Hastings Sand is especially generous in displaying cliff-lines and other strange formations caused by denudation. Elsewhere these are mostly in private grounds, and consequently hard for the casual visitor to see. Near Tunbridge Wells are the Toad Rock, on Rusthall Common, a name which the shape of the rock certainly justifies, and the High Rocks, a line of cliffs about 80 feet high, with birch-trees growing all over them. They have been turned into a public playground, and are of course carved all over with visitors' names. Further off, at Eridge Green, are the Eridge Rocks, similar in character and height, and situated in a beautiful wood. Visitors can see them on Fridays from May to September inclusive.

It only remains to describe those parts of Sussex which are most conveniently visited from Tunbridge Wells. Two of the finest rambles, *i.e.*, by Withyham

to East Grinstead and Worth, and to Crowborough and Ashdown Forest, have already been fully described. Two more short rambles, one to the south, the other to the south-east, will take us to the only parts of Sussex hitherto unvisited. The well-laid roads of sand will be found excellent for cycling.

The goal of the first ramble is Mayfield. We start by the south-west road leading first to Eridge Green, where the rocks just noticed are on our right. To the left is Eridge Park, which it will be more convenient to notice when returning. Soon after passing the modern church we take the left hand at a fork in the road and travel due south until we reach Rotherfield, on the summit of a hill more than 500 feet high, which rises opposite Crowborough and practically continues the Forest Ridge. Rotherfield may be called the Plynlmmon of Sussex, for not only is the source of the Rother in the parish, but important feeders of the Ouse and the Medway also rise close by, though not, as we have already seen, the main sources of these two rivers. The conspicuous church is Early English, with Perpendicular additions (*i.e.*, the tower and spire, the chancel arch, the north porch, and some windows). The sedilia, piscina, and credence table are the original Early English. North of the chancel is the chapel of the Nevilles, Earls of Abergavenny, displaying their cognisance, the portcullis. The east window is filled with glass by Sir Edward Burne-Jones, and there is a curious tomb with a sword or double cross on it.

South of Rotherfield the ground rises a hundred feet higher, and the road running south-west to Mayfield keeps on high ground all the time, only sinking a little as it nears the town itself. Mayfield is set so much on the edge of the plateau just north of

the depression in which the Rother runs, that from the south it looks as if it stood on a detached hill between the two main ridges. Really, however, the hill is connected with the ridge north of it by a sort of high promontory. We are again in one of the great centres of the Sussex ironwork, and the town bears several traces of the prosperity which it then enjoyed, but which has somewhat shrunk since the iron-trade left it. It hardly consists now of more than one long street, but this contains two beautiful timber-built houses, one of which, called Middle House and dated 1575, is perhaps the best instance in the county of this style of building. Richard Jefferies, however, is dissatisfied with it. "At Mayfield," he says, "there is a timber house which is something of a show place, and people go to see it, and which certainly has many lines in its curves and woodwork, yet did not appeal to me, because it seemed too purposely ornamental. A house designed to look well, even age has not taken from its artificiality." Accordingly, as we have already seen, he prefers to it a farm near Buckhurst Park.

Nearly opposite Middle House is the Palace, which was for centuries one of the country residences of the Archbishops of Canterbury, from the times of Dunstan to those of Cranmer. For more than a century the building remained as a picturesque ruin, but in 1864 it was bought by the Roman Catholics, and a nunnery has been built on the site. At first it seems strangers were allowed to inspect the buildings, but the rules were afterwards made stricter. At present they may be seen between 3 and 4 p.m. if previous application be made by letter. The principal room, the Great Hall, which shows beautiful Decorated work, has been turned into the chapel. Here is kept a pair of tongs, which is stated to be the identical pair with which

St. Dunstan seized the devil by the nose. The local addition to the story is that when the devil was released he leapt at a bound to Tunbridge Wells, and by washing his nose in the spring, gave the water for ever its medicinal properties. In spite of this imaginative detail, however, the legend really belongs to Glastonbury; while the tongs are of local manufacture, and pronounced by Lower to be of no great antiquity. Belief in their authenticity seems orthodox in the convent, for Louis Jennings relates (*Field Paths and Green Lanes*) how he got into trouble with the nun who showed him the tongs by thoughtlessly remarking he had heard of the legend, on which she replied, in a tone of mild reproof, "It is not a legend."

Another legend of St. Dunstan, which Mayfield may this time fairly claim as its own, is connected with the church, which was originally a Saxon edifice built by the saint himself, and when finished was discovered to be imperfectly orientated. On this Dunstan put his shoulder to the building, gave a little shove (*aliquantulum pressit*) and pushed it straight. This church was probably of wood and has disappeared. The Early English structure which took its place was burnt in 1389. Nothing remains but the tower and one lancet window. The existing Perpendicular church is thus at least the third built on the site. It has many interesting points, among which are a vaulted porch with parvise above, and four of the iron slabs which were used for gravestones in the ironworking parts of the county, but which now are nearly the only memorials which the works have left behind them.

The return road to Tunbridge Wells is almost due north. It soon diverges from the Rotherfield road near a prominent windmill, and after passing Mark Cross, with its new church and another windmill, runs to

the east of Eridge Park till it reaches Frant. Close to the road, at the south end of the park, is Saxonbury Hill, with an oval earthwork, probably an ancient camp, and a prospect-tower standing more than 600 feet above sea-level. It is difficult to gain access to the tower, since the park is usually shut.

From Frant, which is itself nearly 600 feet high, there is a glorious view over the whole park, with Crowborough as a background, forming one of the best distant views of that hill. The park belongs to the Marquis of Abergavenny, whose family, the Nevilles, came over with the Conqueror, and were settled at Eridge long before Tunbridge Wells existed. The park is kept private, but pedestrians have a right-of-way across it by a footpath which forms perhaps the best walk from Tunbridge Wells. Frant in itself is a thoroughly charming place, its houses being set round a green on which are the old archery butts. Its church, however, is modern. Tunbridge Wells is three miles distant to the north.

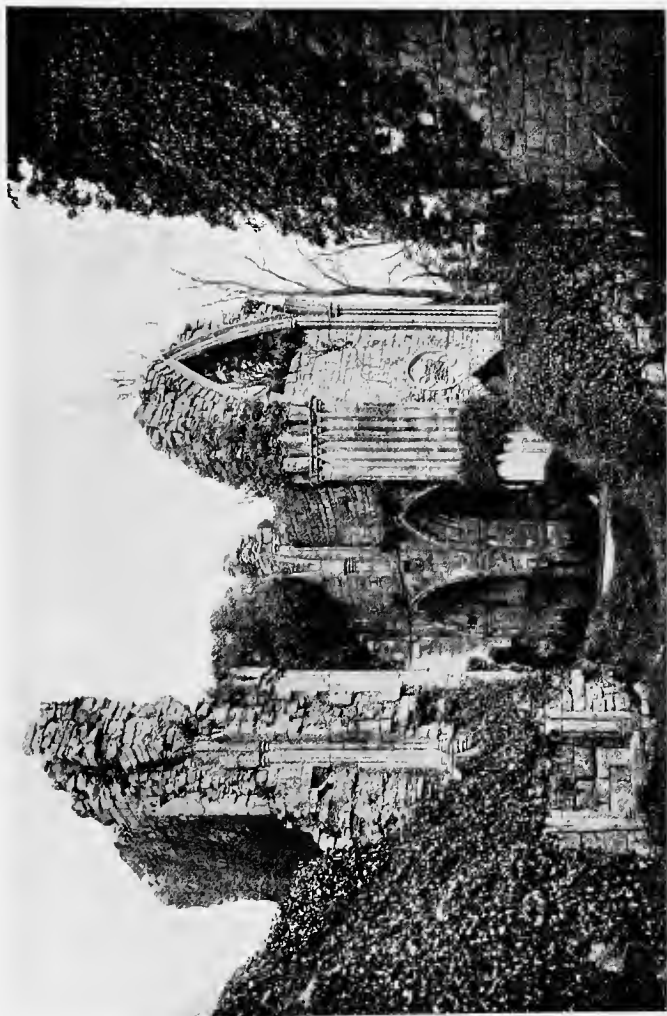
The main objective of our remaining ramble from Tunbridge Wells will be the ruins of Bayham Abbey, which are six miles distant south-east. The route is by Frant Station, which is reached by diverging left from the Frant road. After the station is passed there is a choice of three roads, of which the right-hand one leads in nearly a straight course of three more miles to the gate which admits us (if the day be Monday or Wednesday) into the Abbey grounds. The ruins lie close to the little stream Teise, which here is the boundary between Sussex and Kent. The modern house called Bayham Abbey is actually in Kent.

The Abbey was founded about 1200 by some monks who had first settled at Otham, near Polegate, where

some remains of their chapel may be seen in a barn. Finding the soil unfruitful, they removed hither, and built their abbey in a low-lying site, which seems to our modern ideas too watery. The only incident worth recording in the quiet life of the monks is that their charity made them so beloved in the neighbourhood that when Henry VIII.'s officers came to eject them a large force assembled and reinstated them, appointing Thomas Towers, one of the canons, as abbot. For some time the Abbey was actually held by force; then the resistance died away, the ring-leaders were imprisoned, and Henry's will prevailed.

The ruins are so well kept, everything being spick and span, and dainty with smooth turf, that it is always a pleasure to visit them. But they are too fragmentary to be of much interest in themselves, since they contain not a single window and comparatively few arches. The great church was almost entirely Early English, and some of the fragments are so beautiful that it is tantalising that so little remains. The eastern piers of the central tower, with the vaulted chapels adjoining it in the north transept, form the most continuous and satisfactory part. The other buildings are very scanty. The two most picturesque views are through the chapter-house arches into the cloister garth, and from the garth itself to the door and arches of the ante-chapel.

Continuing eastward along the road by which we came, and which skirts the county boundary for two or three miles, we pass in another mile on our left Lamberhurst, which is just across the boundary, and so counts as a Kent village. It used to be a more famous centre of the ironwork than any in Sussex itself, and was specially great in the manufacture of cannon. A celebrated specimen of the Lamber-



FAYHAM ABBEY

hurst work was the iron railing which surrounded St. Paul's. Whether any of this still remains *in situ* I am uncertain,¹ but as late as 1898 one of the gates belonging to it was removed and presented to Hastings Museum.

In another mile our road crosses the county boundary, just at the point where Scotney Castle is on our left. The very interesting ruins are not visible from the road, and as they lie in a private garden it is difficult to get permission to see them. One circular tower is all that remains of the ancient castle, but this is exceedingly beautiful, for it has fine machicolations, is capped by a conical roof and lantern, and rises straight from the edge of a small lake. There are some ruined adjacent buildings, said to have been built by Inigo Jones.

If, however, we cannot gain entrance to the castle itself, we may at least review its romantic history. In 1259 the castle was held by Walter de Scotney, steward to the Earl of Gloucester, who was induced by William de Valence to administer poison to the Earl and other nobles who were banqueting at the Bishop of Winchester's palace. The Earl's brother and some other guests actually died, and the Earl himself escaped narrowly, with the loss of his nails, teeth, and skin. Walter de Scotney was hanged at Tyburn and his estates forfeited. After this the castle fell into the possession of the Darrells, a noted Roman Catholic family. In 1598 the Jesuit Father Blunt was safely concealed here, and when his hiding-place was

¹ Mr. A. J. C. Hare states (*Walks in London*, 1877) that at the time he wrote part of the railing still remained at the sides of the Cathedral and round the statue of Queen Anne. The rest had been removed owing to a whim of Dean Milman, who considered it a "heavy, clumsy, misplaced fence."

discovered, escaped in sensational fashion by swimming the moat. In the eighteenth century the Darrells, many of whom seem to have been of a daring and adventurous stamp, took an energetic part in smuggling, and once, when hard pressed by the revenue officers, entrenched themselves in Goudhurst Church in Kent (about three miles north-east), where they stood a three days' siege. The wildest of the family was a certain Arthur Darrell, who, having been outlawed, thought a sham funeral might get him out of his difficulties, and, as the story runs, conceived the whimsical idea of attending it himself. Accordingly a mysterious cloaked figure appeared at the graveside, who, when the coffin was being lowered, suddenly pointed to it melodramatically and whispered to one of the mourners "That is not me." When his hearer recovered his presence of mind sufficiently to look round, the incognito was gone.

The return to Tunbridge Wells may be by Ticehurst and Wadhurst. The readiest way of reaching Ticehurst is to cut across a corner of Kent, by keeping for about three miles on the same road by which we have come, and then turning right at the point where it again enters Sussex.

Ticehurst is on high ground, overlooking the Rother valley, which, however, is at some little distance. It is said to be named from the fairy Tys, a sort of local Puck. Can this being have any connection with the hero of Rudyard Kipling's story, who, as we have seen, dwells not far off, on the banks of the Dudwell, south of Burwash? Ticehurst has a Perpendicular church, with a good brass to John Wybarne and his wives and a parvise over the north porch. The Bell Inn is an ancient structure, dating from the fifteenth century.

We are now on the high-road back to Tunbridge Wells, which, keeping on the heights well above the valley, leads us presently to Wadhurst. Here is a spacious church, but of little interest in itself. There is again a porch with a parvise above. These are so rare in Sussex that it is remarkable that four should be found near together—at Rotherfield, Mayfield, Ticehurst, and Wadhurst. But the strangest thing about Wadhurst Church is its pavement, which consists almost entirely of iron slabs serving as gravestones, to the number of thirty. No other church has more than at the most three or four.

The road now for awhile descends, then, rising again, joins the Frant road, by which in another three miles we regain Tunbridge Wells, where we will take our final leave of the county about which we have rambled so long.

NOTE TO PAGE 119

In the discussion on Charles II.'s flight I have not referred to the obvious argument that as Charles had ridden on the Downs the day before, he would naturally choose these the next day as the safest route. Such *a priori* considerations have little weight except when supported by facts. Moreover, it is by no means certain that the Down route would have been safest for Charles. It is significant that Colonel Gounter, when riding to meet him the day before in Hampshire, took a couple of coursing dogs with him, in order to have a colourable excuse for being on the Downs. Since, then, the Colonel regarded riding along the Downs a matter likely to excite suspicion, it hardly seems probable that he would have taken Charles over them the next day, when he had full responsibility for the route taken.

NOTE TO PAGE 122.

In the first edition I was led by the unique authority of Dr. Haverfield on the Romano-British period to express too dogmatic an opinion on a very difficult question. Against his view it has been argued—(1) that rivers do not change their names; (2) that Adur is one of the oldest and most widely-spread river names (compare Adour, Douro, Der-went, &c.) In reply, however, it may be urged (1) that though the persistence of river names is remarkable, yet some small streams have changed their names—there is one, if not two, cases in Oxfordshire; (2) that the real question is, whether the Adur which gave the name to the *Portus Adurni* is rightly identified with the Sussex stream; (3) that it is remarkable that Selden, who was born and bred a few miles from the river, should have been ignorant of its name; (4) that no trace of a Roman fortress has yet been discovered on the banks of the Adur.

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